

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 402 720

EC 305 234

AUTHOR Hammeken, Peggy A.
TITLE Inclusion: An Essential Guide for the Paraprofessional: A Practical Reference Tool for All Paraprofessionals Working in Inclusionary Settings.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-9644271-6-8
PUB DATE 96
NOTE 143p.
AVAILABLE FROM Peytral Publications, P.O. Box 1162, Minnetonka, MN 55345; telephone: 612-949-8707; fax: 612-906-9777 (\$19.95).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Classroom Environment; *Classroom Techniques; *Disabilities; Elementary Secondary Education; *Inclusive Schools; Individualized Instruction; Paraprofessional School Personnel; Regular and Special Education Relationship; Special Education; Staff Role; Teacher Aides; Teaching Methods; Teamwork
IDENTIFIERS *Academic Accommodations (Disabilities)

ABSTRACT

This guide for paraprofessionals offers practical guidelines for assisting in inclusive classrooms. The guide presents an overview of the special education system and an assortment of strategies and ideas to implement in the general classroom environment. An introduction explains the philosophy of inclusion and differentiates it from mainstreaming. Chapter 1 briefly discusses inclusion practices and their benefits. Chapter 2 presents an overview of special education with sections on student placement, specific handicapping conditions, the roles of the various members of the multidisciplinary team, and the necessity for confidentiality. Chapter 3 focuses on the paraprofessional's role and responsibilities, with sections on scheduling and regular communication with parents and teachers. Chapter 4 considers the working relationship between the paraprofessional and the general education teacher and covers the classroom environment, principles of working with students, and different forms of classroom instruction. Chapter 5 briefly considers types of instructional modifications for students with disabilities. Chapter 6 discusses modification strategies in depth, such as modifying textbooks and daily assignments in written language, spelling, and mathematics. This chapter also describes ways to modify the learning environment; enhance the student's organizational skills; adapt directions; and deal with large group instruction, classroom assessment, and behavior and attention difficulties. An appendix includes 17 reproducible forms to assist with inclusive schooling. A glossary defines common special education terms. (DB)

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INCLUSION

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Inclusion: An Essential Guide for the Paraprofessional

A practical reference tool for all
paraprofessionals working in
inclusionary settings

Peggy A. Hammeken

Peytral Publications
Minnetonka, Minnesota

Inclusion: An Essential Guide for the Paraprofessional - A practical reference tool for all paraprofessionals working in inclusionary settings.

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Published by:

Peytral Publications
P.O. Box 1162
Minnetonka, MN 55345
(612) 949-8707 Fax (612) 906-9777

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First Printing 1996

Second Printing 1996

Printed and bound in the United States of America

Publisher's Cataloging in Publication
(Prepared by Quality Books, Inc.)

Hammeken, Peggy A., 1955-

Inclusion: An Essential Guide for the Paraprofessional - A practical reference tool for all paraprofessionals working in inclusionary settings / Peggy A. Hammeken

p. cm.

ISBN 0-9644271-6-8

1. Handicapped children--Education. 2. Mainstreaming in education.
3. Special Education -- Planning. I. Title

LC4015.H36 1996

371.9'046

QBI96-20072

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 96-067057

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Introduction

The educational institution is an ever evolving entity. With the passage of P.L. 94-142 (Education for All Handicapped Children Act) in 1975, the educational system was faced with the challenge of including all students with disabilities into the general education setting. Yet, millions of students continue their education in separate settings or in isolated facilities within districts. Significant amounts of research indicate that separate special education programs have not had the positive impact originally anticipated for students. Research also indicates that isolated programs have not prepared students adequately for their futures. The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) requirements have been upheld in a series of federal district court decisions. These court decisions affirm the right of placement for students in the general education setting when educational benefits for the student are apparent.

The practice of educating children with and without disabilities in heterogeneous classrooms is referred to as inclusive schooling or commonly referred to as inclusion. The philosophy of inclusion differs from mainstreaming in several ways:

- ✓ Inclusion allows students to be educated with their peers in the general education setting. General education placement is the first alternative.

With mainstreaming, students qualifying for service were placed into a resource room program as the first alternative.

Inclusion: An Essential Guide for the Paraprofessional

- ✓ In inclusionary settings, services are provided to the student in the classroom, even when the student's goals are different from their peers.

With mainstreaming, students were removed from the classroom environment for supplemental educational services. As students reached their goal(s), they returned to the classroom setting, usually without assistance or additional support. If the goals were not achieved, the student remained in a segregated program until goals were met.

- ✓ In inclusionary settings, the student is removed from the classroom setting only after modifications, strategies, support and adaptations have not been successful in the classroom environment. A continuum of educational placements, ranging from the classroom to a segregated setting are offered, but the student moves to a segregated alternative only when such a move is necessary.

With mainstreaming, the student was not given the opportunity to work through a continuum of services. The student was not provided the opportunity for success in the classroom environment with appropriate modifications, adaptations to the curriculum, and assistance.

School districts across the country are struggling with the emergence of this new inclusionary educational system. Educators must expand their roles. Teaching no longer consists of one general education teacher and a group of students. It now includes several teachers, specialists, and paraprofessionals working collaboratively to meet the needs of all students. The educator's new role also includes the supervision and training of paraprofessionals. Educators are not accustomed to or trained in this new role. Inclusion has brought change within the educational system. Change is not always easy. It takes time, energy, and a belief that this new system is truly best for all students.

With the movement towards more inclusive schools, new jobs have been created. To provide an appropriate educational environment, curriculum modifications and support must be provided within the classroom. To fulfill this need, the demand for inclusion paraprofessionals has increased throughout the United States.

The role of the paraprofessional is crucial to the success of inclusionary settings, yet training materials are scarce. This book, Inclusion: An Essential Guide for the Paraprofessional, was written to meet this need.

School districts across the nation are in various stages with the implementation of inclusive schools. Some districts are in the initial stages of the process. In these schools, the paraprofessional may be hired and expected to work with students immediately, without training. This lack of training is not intentional. The training simply has not been developed. Districts in initial stages of the process are just beginning to train the special and general education teachers. This takes time. Educators are unable to train the paraprofessionals until they have experience and feel comfortable in the new setting. Therefore, this book will provide you, the paraprofessional, with basic special education information and a potpourri of ideas to get started.

Other districts have been involved with inclusive education for the past several years and have developed extensive training programs for the paraprofessional. If you are employed in a district with a training program in place, this book will supplement your training and become a valuable reference tool.

The book, Inclusion: An Essential Guide for the Paraprofessional, includes an overview of the special education system, basic guidelines to assist you within the setting, and an assortment of strategies and ideas to implement in the classroom environment. The extensive Appendix includes seventeen reproducible forms to assist with various aspects of inclusive schooling.

The ideas presented in this book are from the outstanding efforts of paraprofessionals working within inclusionary settings throughout the United States. I would especially like to acknowledge the paraprofessionals in the Eden Prairie School District in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, from whom I have gained valuable insights into the job of the paraprofessional. It is these paraprofessionals who are the backbone of the inclusion program and make a difference in the lives of many children.

Whether you are looking for your first job, have recently been hired, or you are an experienced special education paraprofessional, this book will provide the support you need to make your job a little easier. If you are a special or general education teacher, this book is an important tool to facilitate the training of paraprofessionals within your school.

Chapter 1

Building Background

Inclusion! What does the word mean? Let's begin with a simple exercise. Take a moment to recall an event during your childhood or teenage years when you felt *included*. Perhaps it was a special group, club, sport, or family event in which you participated. Think about the feelings associated with this event. Take a moment and write the feelings here:

Feelings When Included

Now think about the word exclusion. At this time, recall an event from your childhood or teenage years when you were *excluded*. Perhaps it was a bus ride when you sat alone, an activity or party to which you were not invited, or a family event where all attention was directed towards one of your siblings. Write your feelings associated with exclusion here.

Feelings When Excluded

Take a moment to compare the two lists of feeling words. Which list of words is longer? The feeling words associated with the word exclusion are powerful words. Lonely, misunderstood, rejected, depressed, or unhappy are frequently associated with exclusion. On the other hand, although not as powerful, the inclusion words help you to remember positive experiences.

At a young age students have a strong desire to belong and be accepted by their peers. Students want to be successful in the classroom setting. In order for success to occur, the student must feel safe and accepted within the classroom environment.

Let's consider another hypothetical situation. In this situation, you are the student. You have arrived late to class, and the session is already in progress. You feel embarrassed because of your late arrival. A form is passed out and you are asked to fill it in. The professor asks that all forms are completed individually. Since you were not in the class for the background information, you haven't the slightest idea what should be done. What would you do? Write your choices here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

As an adult, you have several choices. The choices may include: fill out the form later, ask a colleague for support, or note on the paper that due to your late arrival you did not have sufficient background information to fill it in. As an adult, you are able to make these decisions. No one will question you because you are an adult.

Now, let's change the hypothetical situation to involve an elementary level student. Imagine John, a sixth grade student, in a similar circumstance. John has just returned to his class after receiving a sup-

plemental reading curriculum in the resource room. His class is completing an assignment, upon his arrival. What options are available to John? Some options may include the following:

1. John tries to complete the assignment without instruction.
2. John sits quietly until a peer or the teacher is available to assist.
3. John completes an unrelated assignment or project.
4. John disrupts the other students.

In the classroom environment, the four options listed above occur frequently. Upon examination, each option could possibly place John into a no-win situation. Let's examine why.

Option 1: John tries to complete the assignment without instruction.

Students with disabilities often need extra time to complete assignments without appropriate modifications. In this situation, John not only missed the instruction, but is required to complete the assignment in less time. John may need support with reading and writing, therefore, it would be very difficult for him to find the answers in a text or in another student's notes. It is likely that John is unable to complete the assignment on his own.

Option 2: John sits quietly until assistance is available. John has already transitioned to and from a special class. During the transition, approximately 10 minutes of actively engaged learning time is lost. This lost time includes transitioning to the special class and gathering or putting away materials in both settings. If John met a friend in the hall or stopped by the bathroom, this time could easily exceed 20 minutes. When John returns, he does not have sufficient background information to complete the assignment. With 25 to 30 students in the classroom setting, the teacher is unable to attend to John immediately. John needs to wait. Consequently, each transition may cost John 30 minutes of active learning time on a daily basis or 2 1/2 hours per week. If John leaves the classroom more than one time per

day, the active learning time on a weekly basis is decreased substantially.

Option 3: *John completes an unrelated assignment or project.* This is a frequently used option. John may use the time to complete classwork or work on projects. With this option there are several drawbacks and assumptions. Classmates notice John is not required to complete the same assignments. Therefore, an assumption may be made that John is unable to do the work. Classmates may feel it is unfair he does not have to complete the work. These assumptions may isolate him from his peer group. They may have a negative impact on his self esteem.

Option 4: *John disrupts other students.* John returns to class with no available support. No appropriate assignment is available so John begins to talk to or disrupt other students. John is reprimanded by his teacher.

It is very difficult for a student to be successful in a classroom setting while working within a fragmented educational program. In a dual educational system, students requiring the most consistency in programming receive the least. The student must manage two curriculums, two classrooms, two teachers (or more), and most important two sets of rules.

In inclusionary settings, the student remains in the classroom for instruction and the assignments are modified to meet the student's individual needs. The student does not lose valuable learning time transitioning between classes or waiting for assistance upon return. The general education teacher has more flexibility. No longer must the teacher wait until a student from a pull-out session returns to begin a new lesson. Lessons times can be monitored and adjusted immediately, increasing the actively engaged learning time for all students.

Inclusionary Practices: Myth and Reality

Inclusion programs vary between states. The federal laws and state guidelines provide the framework, but the laws are interpreted

differently throughout the country. The interpretation causes confusion between states, districts, and even within individual schools.

There are many myths about inclusion. Here are some of the most common:

Myth: All students with disabilities must complete every assignment in the same manner as the students in the general education classroom.

Reality: The students' assignments are based on the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The assignments are then modified to capitalize on the students' strengths.

Myth: General education students receive a 'watered down' curriculum to compensate for students with special needs.

Reality: The general education curriculum is modified to meet the specific needs of special education students and has no effect on the curriculum for general education students. Modifications may include alternate forms of testing, extra class time to complete assignments, reading materials aloud to students or adjusting the goals and objectives for individual students. These modifications have no impact on the curriculum for the other students.

Myth: Students are placed into the general education class without support and assistance.

Reality: In well-organized inclusionary settings, paraprofessionals and special education teachers provide support to the general education teacher. This may be in the form of consultation, modifications, team teaching, or paraprofessionals providing assistance in the classroom setting.

Myth: Inclusion is not beneficial for the general education students.

Reality: As school populations become more diverse, curriculum and materials are adapted, modified, and changed for students with special needs. These modifications are also used to accommodate students experiencing similar difficulties or for at risk students. Students are exposed to sign language, Braille, communication boards, medical devices, or special equipment. Students learn at an early age that all children have the same thoughts and feelings, regardless of their limitations. Most important, students learn they are more alike than different. A strong sense of community develops within the classroom environment.

Every inclusionary setting is unique to the school system for which it is created. An inclusionary setting does not just occur. The groundwork is laid before the student actually enters the classroom. The major factors which determine the type of inclusionary setting include:

- ✓ number of staff and paraprofessionals
- ✓ grouping and scheduling of students
- ✓ attitude of parents and professionals working within the model.

A large majority of students experience success in the classroom environment with support, appropriate modifications, and with the aid of paraprofessionals.

For a small percentage of students alternate forms of placement are still needed. In inclusionary settings a continuum of services is still available. The continuum of services range from a fully integrated setting (full time in the general education classroom) to a segregated setting, such as a residential center. Alternate placement must be provided for students who are unable to make academic gains after assistance and modification strategies have been implemented in the general education setting.

Benefits of Inclusion

Think about the negative feelings generated in the exclusion portion of the previous exercise. For the majority of students with special needs, *inclusion improves the student's self esteem*. No longer

is the student removed from the classroom to attend a special class, with a special teacher, in a special room. The student views the classroom setting as a safe place to participate and take risks, which are necessary to learn and succeed.

- ✓ *Inclusion improves the educational system.* In the general education classroom, modifications and strategies directed toward students with disabilities are beneficial to the general education students as well. The strategies and modifications help to improve and individualize the existing curriculum for all students. These modifications and strategies become a part of the general education teachers' files and may be used in the future for students with similar academic needs.
- ✓ *Inclusion encourages effective collaboration.* No longer is the current educational system divided into two separate educational systems. The educational system is united. This is beneficial to everyone because:

Communication and collaboration increase as the new educational team is formed.

No individual is expected to have all the expertise required to meet the educational needs of the student in the classroom.

When team members with expertise in many diverse areas work together in cooperative problem solving, results are achieved more quickly.

Inclusion improves the quality of on-site training. Instead of providing separate in-service for specific disabilities or modification strategies, the educational team learns together. All in-service relates directly to the individual student. The training is relevant because all members of the team have accepted ownership for the student. Team members learn by doing.

Inclusion has benefits for all students. When two adults work collaboratively in the classroom, questions are answered more quickly, projects are easily monitored, and all students receive more individualized attention. Students accept one another as contributing members of the school community.

Inclusion is a controversial issue in the field of education. For each benefit listed, inclusion critics will be able to list several disadvantages. Large amounts of time and energy are expended in the debate of whether or not inclusion is best for students. This debate will continue for many years. In the meantime, students with special needs are returning to the classrooms and they need your support. These students have a desire to learn, to be accepted, and to be successful. It is the job of professionals in the educational system to provide the most appropriate educational setting, given the resources which are available within the individual school districts.

Chapter 2

The Special Education Department

Welcome to the world of special education! As an inclusion para-professional, you are a member of the special education department, which also consists of professionals with expertise in many specialized areas. All special education departments operate under a due process of law system. State and federal laws must be adhered. In order to work within the system, it is important to acquire some general information in relation to the special education department. This chapter describes the process of placement, use of labels, roles of multidisciplinary team members, and briefly examines your role in relation to members of the team.

Student Placement

To receive special education services, a multidisciplinary team must determine if the student meets criteria and is eligible for service. The team is commonly referred to as multidisciplinary because each team member has a specialized area of expertise. When a student is referred to this team, the parent is notified by the school. If a decision is made to assess the student, written permission is needed from the parent or guardian. Once permission is received, the special education

process begins. The student is assessed by the team. Student assessments may include the use of informal assessments, standardized tests, and classroom observations. When all assessments are complete, the team members reconvene to compile the data and determine whether the student qualifies for special education services. If a student qualifies for special education service, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is written. The IEP is a legal document which summarizes the assessment findings, records specific student needs, and lists criteria to assist the student in meeting the goals outlined in the IEP. Classroom accommodations and modification strategies are defined. The student's Individual Education Plan is written in relation to the student's needs, not relative to the handicapping condition.

*The student's plan is
written in relation to
their needs, not
relative to the
handicapping
condition*

Handicapping Condition

Two frequently asked questions by new paraprofessionals are: "What is the difference between the various handicapping conditions?" and "How should students be served in relation to their handicapping conditions?"

The purpose of this section is to define frequently used terminology and provide a general synopsis of the various handicapping conditions. Special education is not a science. Each student's disability is as unique as each sibling within a family. Characteristics between the handicapping conditions may overlap. Though stereotypes exist in relation to each handicapping condition, there is no typical student with a learning disability, mild impairment, behavior disorder, language impairment, or other handicapping condition. It is important to recognize that an individual with a disability is always referred to as a an individual first and the disability is secondary. Students in special education are referred to as "a student with learning disability", "a student with a behavior disorder", "a student with a low vision", and so forth. Handicapping labels will vary between states. For example, in one state, "PI" may stand for a student with a physical impairment, whereas in another state, it may refer to a student with a perceptual impairment. For further information regarding definitions and criteria, you are encouraged to contact your special education department or the Department of Education in your state.

Each disability may range from mild to severe. Some of the most common handicapping conditions and acronyms used in special education follow. The terminology varies from state to state. In many states, it is changed every few years. Talk to the teachers in the special education department to determine the labels used in your state. If the terminology is different, you will want to write it on the note page at the end of this section for future reference.

Though stereotypes exist in relation to each handicapping condition, there is no typical student with a learning disability, mild impairment, behavior disorder, language impairment, or other handicapping condition.

Learning Disabled (LD)
Mildly Impaired (MI)
Severely Impaired (SI)
Speech and Language Impaired (S/L)
Behavior Disordered (BD)
Hearing Impaired (HI)
Vision Impaired (VI)
Physically Impaired (PI)
Other Health Impairment (OHI)

As a paraprofessional, you will hear handicapping conditions and their acronyms mentioned frequently in the department. To better understand the terminology used in special education, general information is provided about each handicapping condition. This is only a guideline (for detailed information, talk with the special education department).

The Student with a Learning Disability

One group of students requiring academic support in the classroom is labeled learning disabled (LD). To qualify for a learning disability program, a severe discrepancy between the students' cognitive (intellectual) ability and their academic performance must be documented. This information is obtained during the initial assessment. The majority of students with a learning disability have average to above average cognitive ability, but fail to perform at an academic level which commensurates with their perceived ability. Many states also require documentation of processing. Processing refers to the manner in which the brain receives, stores, and outputs information. Everything a person sees, hears, smells, touches, or tastes is stored within the brain. To recall information the brain must be able to sort and

retrieve the information. When educators speak about processing, they are referring to this process. For students with a learning disability, this process interferes with the ability to learn. Some feel the documentation of processing helps to distinguish an LD student from a student who is underachieving.

For the LD student difficulties may be apparent in the areas of reading, language arts, math, or language. Difficulties may occur in isolated areas or be evident across several areas of the curriculum. Expressive (speaking) or receptive (understanding) language can affect reading or the general acquisition of information. For others, visual discrimination of shapes, letters, and symbols is demanding. This makes copying from the board, reading, or writing difficult. Auditory processing is also common. Difficulties in this area include following multi-step directions, sound discrimination, or the inability to express themselves verbally. Students may experience difficulty with fine and gross motor skills. Fine motor skills include writing, cutting, pasting, drawing, and holding a pencil. The large or gross motor skills include walking, running, catching or kicking a ball, or skipping. Another area that may impact the student's ability to learn is behavior. Some students are hyperactive, unable to focus, unable to stay on task, or follow classroom routines. Social skills may be inadequate.

The profile of a student with a learning disability will exhibit definite strengths and limitations in various academic areas. For example, the LD student may excel in math, yet struggle with reading and written language. The student may read fluently, yet not comprehend the material due to difficulty in the acquisition of language. The student may have strong verbal skills and dominate classroom discussions, yet be unable to write a simple sentence.

The Student with a Mild Impairment

Another category of students, served in inclusionary settings, is the student who is mildly impaired (MI). The label and acronym will vary depending upon the state in which you live. The degree of impairment determines whether the student is considered mildly or severely impaired. A student with a mild impairment has below average cognitive ability, therefore, learns at a slower rate than their peer group. Functional skills also lag behind. Students in this category will learn to read, write, and perform basic math calculations although these skills

will take longer to acquire. A large discrepancy exists not only in the acquisition of academic tasks, but socially and emotionally as well. Students may have trouble paying attention, generalizing skills, applying previously learned skills to new situations, remembering information, or using language and thinking abstractly. Due to difficulty in learning, some students have low self esteem or poor self-concept. The student usually requires large amounts of repetition to learn skills presented in the classroom. Some characteristics are similar to those of an LD student, but a major difference does exist. The LD student has definite strengths and limitations with learning, whereas, the MI student is below average in most academic areas. Functional and social skills usually lag behind the skills of their peer group. The student requires longer periods of time and reinforcement to learn new skills.

The Student with a Severe Impairment

Some students are labeled severely impaired (SI). These students experience extreme difficulty with academic learning. Students in this category may have unique physical needs. Some students will exhibit behaviors such as tantrums, outbursts, and aggressive or passive behavior. Educational programs assist students with learning appropriate social behavior, self help skills which include personal care or grooming, communication, functional academic skills, and to develop independent living skills.

The Student with a Behavior Disorder

Some students have behavior disorders (BD). Terminology, again, varies from state to state. Some states refer to students as emotionally disturbed, conduct disorder, or socially maladjusted. Students with a behavior disorder must exhibit specific behaviors over a long period of time and to a marked degree. Behaviors must interfere with the student's educational performance in the classroom. Some characteristics may include the inability to build or maintain relationships with peers and teachers, inappropriate feelings under normal circumstances, depression, or a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. Attention seeking be-

haviors such as hitting, fighting, and destruction of property may be apparent. The student may be hyperactive, withdrawn, or depressed. Consistency in programming, definite limits, and expectations must be clearly defined for these students.

The Student with a Speech and Language Impairment

Many students receive services for speech and language. A language impairment can be in the area of expressive (speaking) or receptive (understanding) language. To qualify for special education service, the impairment must impact the student's performance in the classroom. Receptive language students often have difficulty understanding directions or oral presentations. Grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary support are often required.

Deficits in the area of expressive language may include articulation (substituting, omitting, distorting or adding sounds) and fluency disorders (stuttering). Some students are unable to organize their thoughts and ideas. Spoken language may be rapid and disorganized. Students with expressive language difficulty often feel uncomfortable participating in classroom discussions.

Voice disorders also fall under the umbrella of speech and language disorders. Voice disorders relate to the pitch, sound, or the quality of the sounds produced.

The Student with a Hearing Impairment

Labels are primarily used as a tool for identification. Once the student is placed, the label is secondary. Programs are developed in relation to the uniqueness of each student, not in relation to the label.

Students with hearing impairments (HI) are served in special education. The hearing impairment has no effect on the student's cognitive ability. Some hearing disorders are not identified until the student enters school. Many students are identified by their general education teacher. A student with a hearing loss may turn his head to one side frequently and increase the volume on audiocassette players or filmstrips in the classroom. It may be difficult for the student to follow oral directions. Directions may need to be repeated frequently and poor articulation skills are often apparent. In addition to service from the

hearing impaired specialist, the student frequently receives support in the areas of speech and language.

The Student with a Visual Impairment

The student with a visual impairment (VI) is served through the special education department. Some students have low vision. With low vision the student may be able to see materials and objects that are close, but unable to see the blackboard, overhead, or distant objects. Another area is often referred to as visually limited. A visually limited student may need special devices such as special lighting or magnifiers. Special equipment is provided by the vision teacher. For some students, due to low vision, mobility is a concern. Large and small motor development may also be delayed. Depending upon the degree of the impairment, modifications and supplemental devices are provided in the classroom environment.

The Student with a Physical Impairment or Other Health Impairment

The last category discussed in special education is the student with physical impairments (PI), or other health impairments (OHI). This category is very broad. A few areas may include students with spina bifida, cerebral palsy, amputations, absence of limbs, or acute health problems such as a heart condition, asthma, epilepsy, cancer, or diabetes to name a few. Along with the physical and medical needs, some students have a secondary handicap such as a learning disability, communication disorder, or severe impairment. Due to the uniqueness of each handicap, these must be defined individually. Cognitive abilities range from superior to below average. Some students may have multiple handicaps or are confined to a wheelchair. Others require no special education service, with the exception of nursing services. Some students are absent frequently, due to extensive medical care. The service provided by the special education department varies depending upon the student's IEP. The special education department will provide information to you regarding these low incidence handicaps.

Inclusion: An Essential Guide for the Paraprofessional

Labels are primarily used as a tool for identification. Once the student is placed the label is secondary. Programs are developed in relation to the uniqueness of each student, not in relation to the label.

Notes:

(List handicapping conditions and acronyms used in your state for future reference.)

The Multidisciplinary Team

The students mentioned in the previous section receive their educational service from a team called the multidisciplinary team. The team consists of many members. Team members vary depending upon the unique needs of the student. Minimally, the initial team consists of the psychologist, special education teacher, classroom teacher, parent, and administrator. You may want to pencil the name of the person in your district after their title for future reference. The team members are listed in alphabetical order:

- ✓ adaptive physical education teacher (DAPE)
- ✓ English as a second language teacher (ESL)
- ✓ general education teacher
- ✓ hearing impaired teacher (HI)
- ✓ nurse
- ✓ occupational therapist (OT)
- ✓ paraprofessional
- ✓ parent
- ✓ physical therapist (PT)
- ✓ principal or administrator
- ✓ psychologist
- ✓ social worker
- ✓ speech and language clinician (S/L)
- ✓ special education teacher
- ✓ vision teacher (VI)
- ✓ vocational educator

As a paraprofessional, you may have little or no experience working within a school setting. You probably applied for the job because you love children and have a special interest in assisting students with special needs. The following section is written to help you increase your understanding of the multidisciplinary team. The first paragraph describes the team members' role within the special education department. Then, your role is described in relation to the team member.

The Special Education Teacher:

The special education teacher is responsible for academic testing and student observations. When a student qualifies for placement, the special education teacher oversees the implementation of the student's program. Each special education teacher is responsible for a specific group of students. The special education teacher is commonly referred to as the case manager of this particular group. The manner in which students are divided depends upon individual school districts. Some districts divide students by handicapping condition. In this manner, teachers with a degree in learning disabilities only serve students who have been diagnosed with a learning disability. Teachers with a degree in the area of mildly impaired serve only students labeled as such. Other districts use a multidisciplinary approach, allowing all special education teachers to work directly with all students, as long as one member of the team holds the appropriate licensure and acts as a consultant.

The special education teacher is the first person with whom you will have contact. You may work with one or several special education teachers throughout the school day. Their role is to define your job and provide basic guidelines and expectations for each student. They provide assistance with the development of appropriate modifications, which you will implement. The special education teacher is responsible to see that the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is adhered. Questions regarding a student's program should be directed to the special education teacher responsible. If questions are unable to be answered, you will be referred to another member of the team.

The General Education Teacher:

The general education teacher usually initiates the special education referral to the special education department alone or in conjunction with the parent. The teacher has a wealth of valuable information regarding academic progress and the social-emotional well being of the student. Information regarding organizational skills, work habits, and processing of information and language is also provided by the general education teacher. Once this information is compiled, a team decision is made whether to assess the student. The teachers' information helps to determine which specific areas should be assessed.

In an inclusionary setting, a close relationship develops with the general education teacher. The teacher sets the rules, guidelines, and expectations for the classroom. The expectations will be different for each classroom in which you work. Instruction is provided by the classroom teacher. Your role in the classroom varies depending upon the unique needs of the learner and the IEP. It may include behavior management, reteaching or reinforcing skills, working with students in small groups, reinforcing self-help skills, assisting with mobility, and modifying curriculum collaboratively with the general and special education teachers.

The Speech and Language Clinician:

The speech and language clinician determines whether or not language impacts learning in the classroom. The clinician's main role on the multidisciplinary team is to assess students for speech and language disorders. Once the student is in program the clinician works with the student to remediate articulation, voice and fluency disorders, or language (both expressive and receptive) difficulties.

The speech and language clinician assists with fostering communication skills in the general classroom environment. Supplemental materials and specific exercises to be implemented within the general education setting will be provided to you. The clinician will also provide ideas and materials for the reinforcement of language skills.

The Parent or Guardian:

The parent or guardian is involved in each step of the educational process. To place a student in special education, a signature must be obtained. The parent or guardian provides invaluable information relative to their child's strengths and limitations. Information relating to health, social, emotional, and other pertinent data contributes to the development of an appropriate educational program.

The case manager will define your role in relation to the parent. You may be responsible to keep a daily notebook with the parent. This notebook might include a daily activity update, a log of homework assignments, general comments regarding the day, or comments about the student's behavior. The special education teacher will tell you what

and how to report these items. You may also be asked to communicate with the parent by telephone on a regular basis.

The School Nurse or Health Assistant:

The school nurse screens students for vision and hearing, offers explanations of medical records and conditions, monitors prescription medicine, teaches specific health care skills, checks fit, maintenance, and function of prosthetic and adaptive devices, and assists parents with medical referrals.

You will be involved with the school nurse or health assistant daily if a student takes medication, requires daily medical attention, or uses prosthetic and adaptive devices. If a student has an emergency medical plan, the school nurse will be able to clarify the procedures for you.

The Psychologist:

The school psychologist's expertise is in the administration and interpretation of standardized tests. The cognitive ability tests (intellectual functioning tests) are administered and scored by the school psychologist. In addition, observation of students, family history, and compilation of student data may be completed by the psychologist. The psychologist is able to assist with the design and implementation of interventions and behavior management systems. The school psychologist also acts as a resource for the building staff.

The school psychologist may contact you for your observations regarding individual students. Feel free to contact the psychologist for information about child development, learning styles, or recommended reading materials on specific disabilities.

The Social Worker:

The social worker acts as a liaison between the home, school, and community agencies. The social worker may counsel students and families, assess the effects of a student's home life on school performance, and assist families in emergency situations. The social worker

often is able to contribute valuable information regarding the student's social, emotional well being that may impact the student's ability to learn.

You may be contacted by the social worker for observations regarding specific students. If a student shares information with you regarding his or her safety, well being, or family situations that may be harmful to the student, it should be reported immediately to the social worker, case manager or administrator.

The Vocational Educator:

The vocational educator provides valuable information regarding the student's work and career potential. The vocational educator offers job counseling, exposure to various jobs, assists with job placement and acts as a job coach. The vocational educator is employed at the secondary level.

Under the direction of the vocational educator, you may assist students with the acquisition of skills necessary for job placement.

The Physical and Occupational Therapists:

The physical therapist focuses on the assessment, training, and use of the lower extremities and large muscles. The occupational therapist focuses on the upper extremities and fine motor abilities.

Both therapists offer suggestions for the modification and the adaptations of materials. Special equipment may be provided and in most cases you will be trained with the use of these devices. Recommendations regarding the general classroom environment and suggestions for student accommodations will also be provided to you. As a paraprofessional, you will be spending large quantities of time with the student and your observations are valuable to this professional.

The Hearing Teacher:

The hearing teacher is responsible for the assessment of students with hearing impairments. Hearing losses range from mild to severe. The role of the hearing teacher is to check hearing aids, assist

with adaptive devices, and provide direct instruction to the student. Some students may require the services of a sign language interpreter.

The hearing specialist is available to in-service staff, provide direct instruction, and assist with strategies and ideas to accommodate the student within the classroom environment.

The Vision Teacher:

The vision teacher assesses and provides information for the student with a vision impairment. Vision impairments may range from low vision to legally blind.

The vision teacher assists students with vision impairments. The vision teacher supplies the general education class with enlargements, audiocassettes, large print books, materials in Braille, and in-service, if needed. If you have a student with a visual impairment in the general classroom, you will work closely with the vision teacher or consultant.

The English as a Second Language Teacher:

The English as a second language teacher (ESL) assists students whose primary language is other than English. The main role of the ESL teacher on the multidisciplinary team is to assist with the assessment of students who do not speak English.

If an ESL student is placed in special education, the English as a second language teacher will consult with you and provide appropriate modifications in conjunction with the special education teacher.

The Administrator:

The school administrator is a member of every educational team. The administrator makes administrative decisions, provides assistance with student schedules, coordinates in-service for staff, and provides support in the development of inclusive settings. The administrator creates the positive environment necessary for successful inclusion.

The school administrator oversees the entire special education department. Due to the size of the special education department, most administrators have one contact person within the special education

department. Questions should be directed to this person, who will convey the information to the administrator, if needed. Feel free to set an appointment at any time if you have specific questions or concerns for the administrator in the building.

Notes:

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a very important aspect of special education. As noted in the previous section, you have access to a wealth of sensitive information pertaining to individual students. All information is confidential and must be treated as such. Specific areas of confidentiality are noted here.

IEP (Individualized Education Plan):

All documents pertaining to the student are confidential. It is important that this confidentiality is respected. Every IEP includes information relevant to the student's performance in the areas of cognitive ability, academic performance, communication skills, motor skills, sensory, health, social and emotional, adaptive functioning skills, and vocational assessment. Psychological and related reports may also be included in this file. These IEPs are written annually and are updated throughout the year. These documents become a part of the student's permanent file and are placed in a separate folder within the cumulative file. When removed from the file, this document must be signed out, dated, and the reason for viewing the file must be documented. Some special education departments encourage paraprofessionals to read the file. Others will share only pertinent information that may affect the working relationship with the student.

Individualized Education Planning Meetings:

You may be asked to attend IEP meetings for students with whom you work. At these meetings, you will be asked to share information regarding the student in the classroom environment. At times, parents will share personal information that assists with programming but is not documented into the IEP. All information shared during an IEP meeting is confidential.

The Special Education Department:

The special education department is a busy department. In the special education area conversations and consultations frequently take place between team members. Members may include social workers, psychologists, school nurses, and outside consultants. Many school districts do not have the luxury of private conference rooms, so conversations and meetings are held in the special education area. All comments and conversations are confidential and should not be discussed with others.

The General Education Classroom:

In the past, educational professionals were accustomed to working alone in the classroom setting for the majority of the day. Not all teachers are comfortable with another adult in the classroom. It takes time to build a relationship with the classroom teacher. Your role is to support the special education students in the classroom. Do not discuss specific classroom or student situations with others. You may work within several classrooms at the same grade level. If you see a unit or idea that will benefit another teacher who is teaching the same lesson, write it down and ask before sharing it with another teacher.

Parents:

You will have frequent contact with parents in the school setting and the community. It is important to remember that the confidentiality applies in the community also.

In the past, lawsuits have been initiated on behalf of students due to this breach of confidentiality. Conversations pertaining to specific students have been overheard in public areas. The best way to avoid any such confrontation is to respect the confidentiality of each student. Therefore, conversations regarding specific students must be confined to the school setting and occur only with adults directly involved with the student.

Notes:

Chapter 3

Getting Started: The Paraprofessional's Role

The first relationship you will develop in the school setting is a relationship with the special education teachers.

The Paraprofessional's Role:

Your role is determined by the student's unique needs and the needs of the special education department. You may work in a classroom environment with several students or assigned to support an individual student throughout the day.

As an inclusion paraprofessional, your job is to support and assist students within the classroom. The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) provides the framework. The special education teachers will provide assistance and guide you to meet the needs of the student within the classroom setting. The special or general education teacher is responsible for the direct instruction of students, whereas, your role includes the reinforcement or reteaching of skills, behavior management, and curriculum support for the special education students. Your job may include lifting, personal care, and mobility. Due to the uniqueness of each student, the job description of every paraprofessional is unique.

Inclusion: An Essential Guide for the Paraprofessional

Some examples of your role may include but are not limited to:

- ✓ creating individualized learning materials and modifying existing curriculum materials
- ✓ providing remedial instruction and reinforcement of skills
- ✓ administering tests individually
- ✓ monitoring and providing assistance to students during seat work activities
- ✓ supporting the student with daily assignments (all areas)
- ✓ reading aloud, reading with small groups, or providing support with independent reading
- ✓ assisting students with written activities
- ✓ assisting with organizational skills
- ✓ checking for work completion or homework
- ✓ playing educational games
- ✓ assisting with behavior modification strategies
- ✓ assisting with lifting and rotating students
- ✓ assisting with personal hygiene, including feeding and diapering
- ✓ documentation and record keeping
- ✓ maintaining daily logs or journals
- ✓ communication with parents regarding homework or daily activities

- ✓ communicating with general education and special education teachers
- ✓ assisting students with motor or mobility limitations

Developing a Schedule:

Once your job description is outlined and defined, a schedule is prepared for you. The schedule is developed collaboratively between the special and general education teachers. You may rotate between classes, be assigned to one classroom, or spend small amounts of time in several classrooms. Perhaps your schedule will include support in a computer class for one student, a physical education class with another, and lunch with a third. Each paraprofessional's schedule will be different due to the unique needs of each student. A sample schedule follows:

(Intentionally left blank to allow full display of the following form.)

Daily Schedule

<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Case Manager</u>
9:30 - 9:45	Classroom #1	Dana Pick up student from bus - walk to classroom	P.C.
9:45 - 10:00	Classroom #2	Michael / Susan Organizational skills Homework completion Daily schedule overview	H.P.
10:05 - 11:00	Classroom #3	David, Pam, Jamie Language Arts - Reteach - read aloud with students - drill over skills	P.C.
11:00 - 12:00	Specials	Peggy, Jim Attend specials - Mon. - Phy-Ed Tues. - Art Wed. - Computer Focus, monitor behavior	L.S.
12:00 - 12:30	Break	Lunch	
12:30 - 1:10	Lunchroom	Dana Assist in the lunchroom Monitor students on playground	P.C.
1:10 - 1:30	Prep time Consultation		
1:30 - 2:00	Classroom #2	Sue, Sara, Aaron, Mike Reading block	K.R.
2:00 - 3:00	Classroom #5	Dana, Aaron, Sue, Jim, Peg Math class Modify math assignments Drill and reinforcement Supplemental curriculum for Dana and Aaron - provided by special ed. teacher.	P.C & H.R.

A blank copy of the Daily Schedule (Form 1) is located in the Appendix for you. Use the form to complete your own schedule. Work through the schedule for several days. Note difficult areas. Transition time may be too short, attending to medical needs may take longer than originally anticipated, or classroom schedules may change. The schedule needs to be reworked until it is effective. It is not uncommon to make schedule adjustments over a period of several weeks.

If you are scheduled into classrooms, there will be times when classroom instruction is taking place and you may feel you are not needed. This time is valuable for many reasons. It allows time to observe the student(s) in the classroom setting. During observation times, write down ideas that will provide support to the student(s) with the lesson. Take notes, write key vocabulary words, main ideas, and questions that can be reinforced after the direct instruction. Write specific observations about the students' behavior, update communication logs, or work on curriculum modifications. This time is valuable for the general education teacher as well. The teacher will be able to monitor and adjust the assignment without providing an individual explanation later.

Scheduling for a Substitute:

As soon as your schedule is created, you must prepare a schedule for a substitute in case of absence. Since your job is varied and you work with many teachers, a substitute schedule is essential. If you work with a student with specific medical or personal needs, it is important to train another paraprofessional to act as a back up for you. Discuss this with the special education teacher. The schedule for a substitute should include the following:

- ✓ Bus duty - If your responsibility includes support to students entering and leaving school, list the students, their bus numbers, and approximate time of pick up and delivery to the bus. Include any special instructions. Pictures of individual student(s) are helpful for the substitute.
- ✓ Special medical or personal concerns - You may be responsible to remind students about medication times. List the student, classroom, and time for the reminder or escort to the health room. Some students may have feeding tubes or catheters. List the student and time the student is to be taken to the nurse. When working with toilet training, list student's name and bathroom breaks or changing times.
- ✓ When providing academic assistance in the classroom, list the class, time, room number, and name of the general and special education

teacher. List students you are responsible to oversee and if appropriate, write general comments regarding each student. Some students experience difficulty with transitions and changes in routine. If you anticipate an adverse reaction to a substitute from a specific student, talk to the general education teacher. The general education teacher will provide program consistency while you are absent. Many times, changes occur in daily classroom curriculum. You will not be aware of these. The general education teacher will guide the substitute paraprofessional when you are absent. If there are emergency medical plans or alternative behavior plans for specific students, attach a copy to your schedule.

- ✓ Lunchroom - If you attend lunch with specific students, provide the name of the student, and the reason for attending lunch (student needs support in the lunch line, student has a tendency to choke, student needs help with outerwear) on the substitute plan.

The substitute schedule is very important. Bus duty, lunchroom, and medical areas should be written clearly and concisely. In areas where support is provided to the classroom, the teacher will be able to guide the substitute. Complete the schedule in advance. Make copies for special and general education teachers. Maps are helpful to a substitute, highlighting the areas where you provide support, if your school has them. Your job is vital to a well-run inclusion program.

Communication

Communication is another important aspect in the role of the paraprofessional. You will be responsible to report to the special education teacher regarding student performance in the classroom. With your insights, the special and general education teachers will continue to review and revise overall plans for the student. There are several methods of reporting. Daily, weekly, and monthly sessions may occur.

Daily Communication:

Jot down notes concerning daily observations of students. It is important to include the day of the week, time, and the class.

Here is one example of a daily communication sheet. You may reproduce Form 2 in the Appendix for personal use.

Student: _____	Date: _____	M T W T H F
9:30 Dana was able to remove outerwear with the assistance of a peer (third time this week). He prefers peer help instead of assistance from an adult.		
Student: _____	Date: _____	M T W T H F
10:00 Sharon is unable to keep up with daily class assignments, reading is slowing her down. She then becomes frustrated. Should assignments be read aloud? Modified in length? Or requirements for the number of assignments be modified?		
Student: _____	Date: _____	M T W T H F
12:00 Classroom teacher received telephone call from transportation regarding Jim on the bus. Please see her ASAP.		
Student: _____	Date: _____	M T W T H F
1:00 Mary has been asked to leave the Art class two times this week for hitting, poking and disrupting the class. Please see the Art teacher ASAP.		
Student: _____	Date: _____	M T W T H F
2:00 Math class is running smoothly. Susan is participating more with the problem solving activities. She has completed the alternate curriculum that you provided. I will need more supplemental curriculum by Tues.		

Remember to write observations objectively. Include the time, day, and class. You may also want to note areas of the curriculum that have been successful for the student. This will help the team create modifications based on the strength's of the student. For students with behavior difficulties, daily communication logs help pinpoint specific areas of concern. Many students tend to be disruptive at specific times each day or only during certain class periods. This valuable information should be given to the special education teacher so modifications to the curriculum or environment can be made for the student. Set aside five to ten minutes per day to meet. During this time, you can share your direct observations about the student.

As the new team develops, the sessions will become shorter and less frequent. It is also important to know that each special education teacher works with several paraprofessionals daily, so conversations should highlight only the most important areas.

If there is an immediate medical or behavior concern, the special education teacher should be contacted immediately. Do not wait until the end of the day. The Backup Discipline Plan Form (Figure A) and The Medical Alert Form (Figure B) should be filled out by the special education teacher or school nurse as early as possible in the school year. Make sure you have a clear understanding of exact procedures when using these forms. The forms should be kept in a classroom file. All professionals involved with the student will also have a copy. In many cases, forms are not filled out until an emergency occurs. Anticipate emergency situations and have a backup plan in place.

Following is a sample of the Backup Discipline Plan. This form is used for students who may be unable to follow the classroom rules. Form 3 in the Appendix may be reproduced.

Figure A

Backup Discipline Plan	
Student: _____	
Date: _____	
Special Education Contact Person: _____	
General Education Teacher: _____	
Backup Discipline Plan: _____	
Additional Information: _____	
If assistance is needed with this student please call the following person(s):	
Contact Person	Telephone Number
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
Copies	
☐	Paraprofessional
☐	Emergency Contact Person
☐	Parent
☐	General Education
☐	Emergency Contact Person

This next form may be used for students with specific medical concerns. Form 4 in the Appendix may be used for students with allergies, prone to seizures, choking, or malfunction of various medical devices. Always be aware of possible symptoms.

Figure B

Medical Alert Form	
Student's name: _____	
Special Education Contact Person: _____	
General Education Teacher: _____	
Area of Concern: _____	
Symptoms: _____	

Additional Information: _____	

If assistance is needed with this student please call the following person.	
☐ This is an emergency situation. Call 911 immediately and then contact the following people.	
Contact Person	Telephone Number
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
Copies	
☐ Paraprofessional	
☐ Nurse	
☐ General Education	
☐ Special Education	
☐ Emergency Contact Person	
☐ Emergency Contact Person	

If you assist a student with mobility, ask the school nurse or special education teacher for a school map that highlights the various emergency evacuation routes accessible to the student.

Weekly Communication:

Ask the general education teacher for weekly lesson plans or make a copy of the plan book. In the beginning you will look over the plans in conjunction with the teacher. Modifications will be planned

jointly. Once you know the student(s) and expectations of the general education teacher, you will initiate many of the modifications on your own.

Monthly Communication:

Monthly meetings may be used to look over units, set long and short term goals and work on curriculum modifications. Do not save daily observations or questionable issues regarding individual students for monthly meetings. These observations must be shared daily or weekly.

Observations:

Another tool for communication is with the use of observations. Some school districts may require one or two observations per calendar year. Observations provide positive comments about your skill in the classroom and your interaction with the students. Some school districts also require yearly goals. These goals may be written in conjunction with the general and special education teacher, or you may write them alone. An example of goals may include:

- ✓ increase communication with special and general education teacher
- ✓ attend a class in relation to a specific disability
- ✓ become proficient with the use of specific adaptive devices
- ✓ try one new technique with a specific student per week
- ✓ keep a list of successful modifications for a specific student
- ✓ attend a CPR course

The special or general education teacher will be able to offer additional suggestions about your specific goals.

Chapter 4

The Paraprofessional and the General Education Teacher

Previously, general and special education were a dual educational system. With the onset of inclusion, the educational system in place for many years must merge and the merger is not always easy. The general educator is no longer teaching alone in the classroom. Paraprofessionals, special education teachers, and consultants are entering and leaving the classroom environment throughout the day. This movement can be very distracting to the general education teacher and disruptive for the students. This chapter will focus on the paraprofessional in the classroom environment.

Working in the Classroom Environment:

As a paraprofessional you may be assigned to one student in a classroom or to many students in separate classrooms. Here are some basic guidelines to follow.

Rules:

Ask each classroom teacher for a list of rules and expectations. The following topics should also be discussed: classroom discipline, turning in assignments, pencil sharpening, bathroom privileges, and the behavior management system. Rules and expectations vary greatly between classrooms. Therefore, it is important to keep a list for each classroom. Consistency in this area is important, especially for a student who receives support from several different adults throughout the school day. The reproducible form entitled Classroom Information (Form 5) is designed for use with the general education teacher. Fill out an individual form with each general education teacher. Keep it in a classroom file for future reference.

If an alternate discipline plan is needed for a student, the plan is written jointly with the general and special education teachers. The form entitled Backup Discipline Plan discussed in the previous chapter will assist. Copies of this plan should be distributed to all teachers and paraprofessionals involved with the student.

Establishing a Work Area:

Establish a work area in each classroom. It may consist of a table or student desk. You will need a folder and notebook so daily notes can be left for you. Keep a list of classroom rules, expectations, and emergency information in this file. The general or special education teacher will also leave projects at this work area. These projects may be completed while the general education teacher is teaching, during movies, or other times when you need to be present in the classroom, but direct assistance is not needed. Most paraprofessional's hours coincide with the student school day. This makes communication with general and special education teachers difficult, but not impossible. Large amounts of communication will be in writing.

Entering and Exiting the Classroom:

It is important to enter and leave the classroom quietly. Until students become accustomed to your presence, attention will be directed to you. Do not respond to students as it distracts others and

the teacher from the current lesson. At an appropriate time, explain to the individual student(s) the importance of focusing on the lesson even though adults are entering and leaving the room. When a general education teacher has several students with special needs in the classroom, you are only one of many adults who enter the classroom on a daily basis.

The following are common situations you will encounter when entering the class.

Lecture: If the general education teacher is in the middle of a lecture or demonstration, go directly to your workstation and read the lesson plans or notes for the day.

Cooperative groups: If the students are working in cooperative groups, check on the special education student(s) and judge whether support is needed. If so, assist the student(s) before checking messages or talking with the classroom teacher.

Independent or Seat Work Activities: If students are working independently at their desks, check to see if the special education student(s) are able to complete the work independently. If not, modify the assignment. There will be times when the seat work is not appropriate for the student. Instead of completing an inappropriate assignment, reteaching may take place. The general education teacher may give you specific materials to complete with individual students.

If the general education teacher is available, several minutes may be spent discussing specific student(s) or lessons. If not, hold the communication until a later time.

Expectations for Students:

Always think of the students as "*a student first and the disability second*". If you maintain high expectations for each student, the student(s) will rise to meet your expectations. Students should always be challenged and encouraged to do their best. As strengths are noted for each student, find ways to reinforce them. If a student experiences difficulty in an academic area it does not mean the student will not reach their goals as an adult. No matter what the limitations may be, find the strengths and capitalize on them.

If you are concerned whether a student is able to complete an assignment, ask the classroom teacher. Do not enable the student by completing it for them. Ask the student to complete as much of the

assignment as possible. It is more beneficial to the student if the assignment is modified and a small amount is completed alone. It will not reflect on you, as a paraprofessional, if the assignment is not completed. The student must be held accountable for work completion and take the responsibility to turn it in.

Working with Students:

When working with students in the classroom environment, it is important to be available to students but not hover over them. In the early years, students enjoy individual assistance. At about nine or ten years old, students no longer want to appear different from their peer group. Though they may still desire special assistance, fitting in with their peers becomes more important. Your primary responsibility is to assist the student with special needs, but it is also important to respect and foster independence. Walk around the class. Assist all students. In this manner, students begin to see you as an integral part of the class. There will be many students who would like your help. You may assist others, but always remember your area of primary focus is the student in special education.

Communicating with Students:

At times a student may not want assistance, but it is apparent to you and the general education teacher that support is needed. If the student refuses assistance and it is clear the student is unable to complete the assignment alone, there are several options. You may want to discuss the following options with the general and special education teachers in advance.

*Always think of the student as
"a student first and the disability second"*

Option One:

- ✓ Allow the student to complete the entire assignment alone. Check the final quality of the assignment. If the quality is acceptable, the student turns in the assignment. Congratulate the student for completing the work independently. If the student has guessed, filled in

answers that have no meaning or it is obvious the student did not understand the assignment, it must be redone individually with the student. You will encounter times when a student refuses to redo the assignment. In this case, follow the classroom plan for incomplete assignments. This plan will vary from classroom to classroom. You cannot force a student to complete the assignment. Yet, the student cannot be allowed to manipulate the classroom situation. Never get into a power struggle with the student. If a student frequently refuses to complete assignments, talk with the special education teacher.

Option Two:

- ✓ Ask several general education students to work in a group with the student. In this manner, the student is not always singled out in the classroom. General education students may be included into groups, but not on a regular scheduled basis, even if support and assistance are needed. The general education teacher is able to use the modifications which have been created for the students in special education. For service to be provided to students, on a consistent basis, an Individual Education Plan must be in place.

Option Three:

- ✓ Ask the general education teacher to take your group for reteaching or support while you walk around the class assist other students.

Speak to students with special needs as you would other students in the classroom environment. Do not talk down to the student, change your tone of voice, or use phrases that are not age appropriate. Students in the general education class are modeling your behavior. Students are learning from you. If you hear or observe other students in the classroom talking down to students, gently correct them in private. If the problem persists, in-service may be required for the entire class by the special education department.

When communicating with some students, you may need to shorten the length of the sentence, give directions one step at a time, or leave out confusing details. This is especially true for students with

receptive language difficulties or hearing impairments. This can easily be done without changing your tone of voice.

Classroom Instruction

There are many types of instruction that occur in the classroom on a daily basis. The following types of instruction occur frequently in the classroom environment and are conducive to inclusionary settings. The individual goals and objectives for each student are developed collaboratively between the general and special education teachers.

Multi-level Instruction:

Multi-level instruction is one form of instruction used in the classroom environment. In multi-level instruction, the classroom teacher or the special education teacher provides the instruction for the class. With the focus placed on the key concepts, students demonstrate their knowledge through presentations, projects, or assigned activities. The outcome for the student with special needs may be simple or very complex. This type of instruction is conducive for special education students.

Let's look at a simple example of multi-level instruction. Let's pretend a classroom teacher is teaching a unit about volcanoes. The class is required to read and learn about the formation of volcanoes, locate active and inactive volcanoes, and learn ten vocabulary words associated with the lesson.

If the lesson is inappropriate for the student with special needs, a goal for the student is written. Appendix Form 6 is a worksheet that may be used. The goal may be simple or complex depending upon the individual student. The goal in the hypothetical situation might be: *The student will demonstrate knowledge as to the formation of a volcano and learn five vocabulary words associated with volcanoes.*

Some of the objectives to assist the student in reaching the goal may include:

- ✓ The student is required to listen to the class lecture and use diagrams from supplemental texts, in place of reading the text book.
- ✓ The student is required to listen to the textbook on tape or join a small group and listen to the text as it is read aloud.
- ✓ The student will use a map to locate active and inactive volcano locations.
- ✓ The student will create a model or diagram of a volcano in place of a paper and pencil test. The model will demonstrate the student's knowledge of the five pre-selected vocabulary words.

You may have students who are unable to complete the assignment. Cognitively and developmentally, they are not at the same level as their peer group. The student is still able to participate in the unit.

A goal for this student may be: *The student will be able to distinguish between a mountain and an active volcano. The student will understand the difference between mountains, deserts, and plains.*

Objectives to assist the student in meeting the goal may include:

- ✓ The student will look at various pictures of mountains, plains, and deserts. The student will be able to select pictures of mountains. (Vocabulary development)
- ✓ The student will create a book with pictures of mountains, plains, and deserts. A description will be included of each geographical area.

Some examples may include:

- ✓ A mountain is very big and tall. Sometimes snow is at the top. Some people go to mountains to ski.
- ✓ The desert is very hot and dry. Cactus grows in the desert. A desert has very little rain.
- ✓ The plains are very flat. They are good for farming. Many crops are grown on the plains.

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- ✓ The student will formulate sentences alone or with your assistance. The student may copy sentences from your example or trace sentences you have written. (Written language and fine motor)
- ✓ The student will be able to distinguish between a picture of a mountain and an active volcano. (Visual Discrimination)
- ✓ The student will create a model mountain out of modeling clay.

In all situations, the student is participating in the classroom, even though the goals and objectives may be different from those of their peers.

Cooperative Learning:

Cooperative learning is another form of instruction that allows all students to be included into the classroom with relative ease. In cooperative learning, the emphasis is placed on the process of learning. The grade is based on both individual and group effort. In this method, emphasis is placed on planning and working together. An example of cooperative learning follows: *The class is working on measurement during a cooperative science unit. There are four students per group. The cooperative groups vary depending upon the unit.*

The advantages of cooperative groups are as follows:

- ✓ If a student has difficulty reading, a fluent reader can read the assignment and instructions aloud. The student is able to participate in the entire lesson.
- ✓ If the student experiences difficulty with writing, one member is assigned to write for the entire group and the student contributes ideas. The student is a fully active participant.
- ✓ If a student has difficulty cooperating in a group situation, the student is assigned a specific task, therefore, limits are naturally defined.

- ✓ The student who is not cognitively or developmentally ready may be assigned to gather materials and put them away, with the support of a peer. If measuring liquid using the metric system, the student may be asked to get the water that will be used by the group. If measuring lengths, the student may use a ruler, yardstick, or tape measure while other students are measuring in meters, centimeters and millimeters. The goal for this student may be recognition of numbers or counting the number of yardsticks it takes to measure the width of the classroom.

Again, the student is able to participate in the classroom, even though the goals and objectives of the lesson may not be the same as their peers.

Mastery Learning:

Mastery learning is a teaching strategy used in all classrooms. Mastery learning focuses on concepts and allows opportunity for the student to gain mastery at their level through reteaching and reinforcement of skills. An example of mastery learning is as follows: *The class is learning about nouns and verbs in a sentence. The students in the classroom are expected to complete a quiz about nouns and verbs. The students are expected to achieve 80% or better on the quiz.*

- ✓ Extra drill and practice worksheets may be provided for the student. These may be completed alone or with you.
- ✓ For some students the concept is mastered but the student is unable to read the sentences in the workbook or assigned activity sheet. Partner the student with a fluent reader so the assignment may be completed together.
- ✓ If reading is difficult, an alternative is to allow the student to choose nouns and verbs from their alternate reading text or a text with a lower readability index.
- ✓ If the student has difficulty writing, test the student orally. Ask the student to tell you ten nouns within the classroom. Ask the student

to observe the actions of the students in the class and state ten verbs. Another alternative to writing, is to photocopy the page from the textbook. Allowing the student to circle or underline the correct answer in place of writing the entire assignment.

- ✓ For the student with a severe discrepancy, the lesson may focus on vocabulary development using nouns and verbs. Cut out pictures from a magazine of nouns such as boy, dog, girl, or toy. Label the pictures. Add a verb to the picture and work on sentence construction. Examples for the listed nouns may include: *The boy eats. The dog plays. The girl runs. The toy spins.*

With Mastery Learning the student reaches the goal. The difference is that it may be reached in a nontraditional way.

Activity Based Learning:

Activity based learning allows the student to learn in actual or simulated settings. Examples of activity based learning may include:

- ✓ Teaching measurement through cooking
- ✓ Teaching the concept of money by creating a class store
- ✓ Providing actual job training on site

Peer tutoring:

Peer tutoring is used in many classroom settings. Many students learn by teaching others. This can be a positive experience for both the tutees and the tutors. Peer tutors can lend support to students with special needs. Training must be provided for the tutors so they do not enable students or complete assignments for them. Students in special education should have the experience as a tutor also. This opportunity does not need to occur in the student's classroom. As you discover the strengths and special talents of each student, share this information with the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher will be able to place the student in tutorial or leadership roles in or out of the classroom setting. Some suggestions follow:

- ✓ Provide opportunities for the student to read to or tutor younger students. Assist the student with the selection of appropriate materials. If a student is unable to read, schedule a session in the primary classes. The student may turn the pages, while you read aloud.
- ✓ A student with a learning disability may be very artistic. Allow the student to demonstrate techniques or teach an art activity to a small group of students.
- ✓ Allow students with strong verbal skills to lead a discussion group.
- ✓ A student with a reading or writing disability may excel in math. Allow the student to tutor those who experience difficulty in math.
- ✓ If a student excels in music or the arts, provide an opportunity for a lead in a class play or to play a solo.
- ✓ A student with natural athletic ability may demonstrate techniques or skill areas to the rest of the class.
- ✓ Any student that uses specialized materials such as communication tools, Braille, or a wheelchair can demonstrate the use to the class. If possible, obtain a second wheelchair and allow students to use it. Provide books in Braille. Ask the student to read the books to the class. Allow classmates the opportunity to read in Braille. A student with a communication board can demonstrate the functions to the class. Following the demonstration, allow the student to teach others how to use it. If a student uses sign language, have the student incorporate several signs daily into the curriculum.

All students should have the opportunity to teach others. Many times the student with disabilities is not given this opportunity. All students have their strengths. It is important to capitalize on these strengths and provide every student the opportunity to be a leader.

Technology:

Technology is often used for curriculum support. Computers are a great tool for students. Computers provide the immediate feedback that is so important for many students. Most programs incorporate several skill levels into each program. This allows the student to receive extra drill and practice or begin a new skill at an appropriate level. When using the computer individually or as a class, programs can be provided for all students at their current level of performance. Computers are also appropriate for students who experience difficulty with spelling or fine motor control. The student is able produce a quality assignment without worrying about penmanship or numerous misspelled words.

Notes:

Chapter 5

Modifications Categories

There are many different ways to modify the curriculum for students. As a paraprofessional, you will be responsible to make modifications in the classroom. Many times modifications must be created on the spot. The special education teacher is not always available for consultation and the classroom teacher may be occupied with other students. You need to make decisions alone. This chapter describes the four basic categories of modifications that occur in the classroom environment.

The Activity or Content Area is Reinforced:

In this category the students are provided sufficient support to allow them to be successful with the classroom curriculum. This support will enable the student to complete classroom assignments and to fulfill the class requirements. This category of modifications includes previewing, preteaching, and/or reteaching of assignments. Curriculum may also be reinforced with the use of supplemental aids such as study guides, outlines, or the use of audiocassettes.

Previewing material means that you will preview the material with the student before it is taught in the classroom. You may read the bold faced vocabulary and discuss it with the student. Captions can be read aloud and headings discussed. If there are questions at the end of

the story or unit, attention may be focused on these so the student knows the type of information for which they will be held responsible. In the previewing stage it is helpful to ask the student to recall as much information as possible about the topic. In this way, new concepts are related to previous learned knowledge.

Preteaching material helps the student to understand the concept before it is actually taught. For example, if you know the upcoming lesson is nouns, the student may identify nouns in the classroom environment. In social studies, science, or reading, the vocabulary could be discussed and pretaught so the student has the necessary background information for the upcoming unit. When preteaching vocabulary, it should always be taught in the context of the textbook, especially if words have multiple meanings.

Reteaching material takes place after the general education teacher has presented the lesson. At times, classroom instruction and guided practice sessions do not provide sufficient practice for the student with special needs. As you work through assignments individually, you will be able to note if the student missed a step or the specific type of error that is causing difficulty.

The Content Area is Adapted or Modified:

In this category, modifications are made to the actual material or content area of the curriculum. The student may be given extra time to complete the required assignment. Assignments may be shortened or completed together. The number of spelling words may be decreased. The assignment may be written for the student. Assignments may be done orally instead of in writing.

A Parallel Activity may need to be Developed:

In this category, supplemental materials and activities may be provided with similar or parallel content to the curriculum. Supplemental books may be used in place of the general education curriculum. These books may have similar content but contain a limited vocabulary and are written at an easier readability level. The special education teacher will provide you with parallel activities.

The Classroom Activity is the Same, but the Final Outcome is Different:

In this category the student may perform the same type of activities as their peer group, but the outcome will be directly related to the student's Individualized Education Plan. At this level the student may listen to a story from the reading textbook or sit with the class while the story is read aloud, but the actual goal may be a group socialization goal. If the class is writing a story, the student may work on handwriting or model with clay, which is a fine motor goal. In math class the student may use the calculator to perform basic math operations while the peer group is performing advanced math calculations. In this case, the student's goal may be to learn and use the functions of the calculator. These goals are called functional goals. Functional goals are based on skills needed to live independently in a supervised apartment or a group home as an adult.

Chapter 6

Modification Strategies

As you learned in the previous chapter, there are several categories of modifications ranging from simple to complex. The following chapter provides you with many ideas to implement in the classroom. Since all students are unique, a successful modification for one student may not be applicable for another. Therefore, the intent of this chapter is to provide a potpourri of ideas from which to choose. The ideas are numbered for fast and easy reference. These ideas are used in successful inclusionary settings throughout the United States.

The Appendix contains Forms 7-10 which may be used to document the curriculum modifications. Since all students are unique, separate forms are used for each student. The forms can be filled out at the beginning of the school year and updated periodically as appropriate.

Organization of the Modifications

Before modifications are created, determine how you will file and save this material for future reference. Modifications take time to create. If classroom texts or novels are not available commercially, it will take fifteen minutes to several hours to create each one. This

material must be filed and saved for future reference. If not, materials will become lost and need to be recreated for the following year.

- 1) A simple way to organize the material is to purchase several 4", three ring notebooks. Label each three ring notebook by subject and classroom teacher. Insert pocket folders or clear transparency holders into the three ring notebook. Label and insert tabs to identify each unit. As modified or supplemental materials are created, insert materials into the corresponding pocket. Each year material can be added to the notebook. The extra time spent with the organization now will save hours in the upcoming years.
- 2) What should be saved? The answer is simple. Save everything that may be used for review or in the future with other students. Materials may include:
 - ✓ vocabulary words on index cards
 - ✓ bold faced words from the unit
 - ✓ definitions of vocabulary and bold faced words
 - ✓ audiocassettes of textbooks, novels or stories
 - ✓ discussion questions with page number, location, and clues
 - ✓ modified units
 - ✓ lists of supplemental materials to reinforce the unit

Discuss this with the special education teacher. List additional materials to be saved here.

Textbook Modifications

The majority of the students in special education encounter difficulty in the area of reading. Since reading encompasses an enormous portion of each school day, textbook modifications are critical if the student is to experience success throughout the school day. The following modifications are applicable for all textbooks.

Creating Audiocassettes:

Audiocassettes are a wonderful and valuable tool for students with disabilities. They may be used during the school day or taken home to review materials for upcoming tests. If curriculum audiocassettes are not available, you may be asked to make them. It is an easy way to obtain a comprehensive overview of the curriculum. Audiocassettes also provide support to the students who have been absent. Read through the following ideas before the audiocassettes are created. In conjunction with the special education teacher, determine which format best meets the needs of the individual students.

- 3) When preparing audiocassettes, read in a clear voice. Eliminate all background noise. Find a quiet place with no distractions. Texts should be read at 120-175 words per minute. When practicing, first determine a passage of approximately 150 words. Practice reading this passage several times with a timer, to calculate the reading speed. When complete, listen to the recording. Make sure the audiocassette is clear and easily understood.
- 4) Begin the audiocassette with a statement of the title, chapters, and the page numbers recorded on the tape. (i.e. Grade 3 - Social Studies - Chap.1, pg. 7-18.) Use a consistent labeling system for easy filing. These tapes will be used in the upcoming years.
- 5) Include study guidelines at the beginning of the audiocassette to orient the student to the main points of the section. The study guidelines may include the vocabulary words listed in bold type and the study questions located at the end of the unit. This will help the student to focus on important facts.

- 6) List comprehension checkpoints on the tape such as *"Please stop the tape here and list three uses of water."* Provide the student with an answer sheet or include the answers on the tape. Ask the special or general education teacher for the main objectives of the lesson. These objectives will help to determine where specific checkpoints should be located.
- 7) Ask the special or general education teacher if an extra textbook is available. Place key symbols in the text that relate to specific portions of the audiocassette. For example:

* - an asterisk may indicate a portion of the text that has been paraphrased on the audiocassette

- the pound sign may indicate the student should stop and give the definition for a word in bold type.

Discuss the key symbols with the special education and general education teachers. Tape a key with the symbols into the front of the book.

- 8) If a student is required to read the material alone during class or at home, tape record alternate pages of the textbook. This allows the student to listen to one page and read one page either silently or aloud. Make sure it is noted on the label if the text contains alternating pages. This assists the student who is struggling to keep the same pace as his or her peers.
- 9) Paraphrase the entire text, with simplified vocabulary for the student who is unable to read. Ask the special education teacher or the general education teacher for the main objectives of the lesson. When paraphrasing, include only the most important material. Talk about the pictures, bold faced print, and the diagrams. If you are paraphrasing a story or novel, retell it in simple terms. Paraphrasing is difficult. The material must be practiced before attempting to make an audiocassette. When material is paraphrased, make sure it is noted on the label.

Preview or Preteach Materials in Advance:

Materials often can be previewed. With previewing, the students have a basic understanding of the concept before it is presented in the classroom. This helps the student to build self confidence.

- 10) Make an audiocassette of stories and novels. Allow the student to take the audiocassette home before the material is read in class. If the student is familiar with the main characters, story, and plot and it will be easier to understand the material or concepts presented by the general education teacher.
- 11) Preview and discuss pictures in textbooks before material is read in class. Ask the student to tell you as much information as possible about the subject. For example, if the story is about a ship crossing the ocean, ask the student what they know about ships and oceans. How does an ocean look, sound, feel, smell, and taste like? Have they ever been on a boat or ship? Once again, what did it feel like, what did they see, hear, taste, or touch? Refer to these experiences when previewing the pictures. Relate the new concepts to past experiences and knowledge.
- 12) Review bold faced words with the student. Practice reading the new words. Define and discuss the vocabulary in the context of the story. It is important to have a teacher's guide or student book so multiple meaning words are defined within the context of the unit. Practice using the words in sentences directly related to the textbook material.
- 13) Provide the student with a list of discussion questions before reading the text. Help the student locate the answers. Include page number and clues with discussion questions.
- 14) Ask the general or special education teacher for a student textbook to write in. Highlight important information in the textbook. Color code the student textbook. An example follows:
 - Color Key(Tape the key into the front of the textbook)
 - ✓ yellow - vocabulary words
 - ✓ blue - definitions
 - ✓ green - topic sentences, important facts, and test information

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- 15) Together generate an outline of new vocabulary and main ideas for each unit. This can be used as a take-home study guide.
- 16) If reading aloud causes apprehension for the student, choose several paragraphs to practice in advance. Let the general education teacher know which paragraphs the student has practiced. The teacher can call on the student to read only the prepared section.
- 17) Teach the student to use the RAP acronym below. This will assist with paraphrasing of materials. Paraphrasing assists the student with memorization. Practice using this strategy with the student.

Read the paragraph

Ask yourself to recall the main idea and several details about the material

Practice saying the main ideas and important details in your own words.

- 18) Ask the general or special education teacher if the student can check out a set of textbooks for home use.

On the Spot - Textbook Modifications:

At times, you may not have an opportunity to preview materials in advance with the student. These strategies will assist the student with the material in the classroom setting during the actual lesson.

- 19) Read the text aloud using a guided reading procedure. With this method, you guide the student step-by-step through the material. As you read the material aloud, stop frequently to ask questions, summarize, or paraphrase the information and to check for understanding. Students should follow along while you read aloud.
- 20) The general education teacher may decide to divide the class into two groups. The students with special needs may be divided or remain in one group. The general education teacher provides the outcomes of the lesson to you. The general education teacher reads aloud with one group, while you read aloud with the other. This allows for maximum active participation of all students.

- 21) When students read aloud, allow the student to pass or play. The student with special needs may not feel comfortable reading in front of a group. As their comfort levels increase, risks will be taken. If the student chooses to read aloud, strategically seat the student near you or with a friend to help read unknown words.
- 22) Provide an outline of the textbook material. Allow the student to take notes on the outline while peers are reading.
- 23) Supplemental materials may be available in a high interest, low vocabulary text. Often complementary texts may be found. Ask the special education teacher.
- 24) If the general education teacher allows, tape record material when it is read aloud and discussed in the classroom. The student will have the material and the classroom discussion on tape for reinforcement at a later time.
- 25) Prepare an outline of important material for the student to use as a guide when listening to materials.

Novels and Free Choice Reading:

- 26) Ask students to tape favorite books or novels. The students may check-out these books from the media center or a classroom library to listen to during silent reading time.
- 27) If there is a non-reader in the class, read aloud to a small group of students. Vary the students in the group. Allow the student to choose a friend to participate in the group.
- 28) Check the local library for videotapes of current class novels or stories. The student can view the video instead of reading the material.
- 29) When you are not in the classroom, ask the general education teacher to appoint a student to be the *Teacher for the Day*. This student can read aloud to a small group or an individual student. Use the student checklist, Form 11 in the Appendix, to record the

names of volunteers. Allow all students the opportunity to be the *Teacher for the Day*.

- 30) Provide a collection of novels or stories on audiocassettes in the classroom.

Tracking Difficulties:

Many students have difficulty following along when material is presented in written format. For some students directionality has not been established. The student may not be sure where to begin reading, may try to read from right to left, or have difficulty moving from line to line. The student may continually lose his/her place. You may feel as though you are always redirecting the student. If this occurs the student is probably experiencing difficulty with visual tracking.

- 31) Partner the student with a peer and allow the peer to assist with visual tracking. Allow students to share textbooks.
- 32) Give oral location clues when reading aloud. Redirect the student by pointing out page and paragraph numbers frequently. For example, *Please begin reading on page 54, paragraph 2.*
- 33) When the class is reading aloud, frequently check to see if the student is in the correct place. When you are not available, the student should be seated near the general education teacher, so tracking can be easily monitored.
- 34) Give the student a bookmark to keep his or her place.
- 35) Place a horizontal arrow running from the left to the right side of an index card to assist with directionality.
- 36) Cut a window into an index card. This will assist the student in focusing on one line of text material at a time. Due to the different print sizes in textbooks, the student will need one card per textbook.

- 37) Provide a picture frame made from construction paper. The student will be able to see several lines of print, yet block out the distracting stimuli.
- 38) Allow the student to listen to the material and view the pictures while someone else reads aloud.

Hearing Impairments:

The following suggestions will provide additional support for the student with a hearing impairment.

- 39) The student should be seated near the teacher.
- 40) Use visual signals frequently to secure the student's attention when reading aloud. Redirect as necessary.
- 41) Speak and read clearly, in a normal tone, at a moderate pace.
- 42) Rephrase the content areas when reviewing lectures. Do not give lengthy explanations.
- 43) Provide an outline and vocabulary list in written format, before introducing new material. Practice reading the words aloud. Encourage the student to preview the information at home before the lesson is presented.
- 44) Present new vocabulary words in sentences, instead of isolation. Many words look similar to lip readers.
- 45) Repeat and summarize information if presented orally.
- 46) If the student reads lips, a swivel chair is beneficial. The student is able to see the teacher and the interpreter at all times.

Vision Impairments:

If the student with visual impairments appears to be inattentive or looking around in the classroom, the student may be relying on the auditory channel to gain information. Students often experience visual fatigue during classroom assignments.

Many materials are available specifically for visually impaired students. The special education teacher or vision consultant may order enlarged textbooks, magnifiers, closed circuit television, and computer software with enlarged fonts and pictures. Ask for in-service when new equipment and materials are introduced. You can assist the student when the specialist is not available.

- 47) Provide audiocassettes for the student's use. Audiocassettes should be recorded on cassette players with variable recording speeds. The student is able to increase the speed as auditory skills are refined.
- 48) Allow extra time to complete assignments. Be aware of visual fatigue during activities. Some signs of visual fatigue may include red eyes, rubbing of the eyes, laying the head on the desk, and squinting. Discuss with the general and special education teacher, classwork, and the types of modifications that should be implemented if the child experiences extreme visual fatigue. A possibility is to allow assignments to be completed orally. Before turning the assignment in, note that it was completed orally, initial, and date it. The general education teacher or parent can contact you should questions arise.
- 49) When directing questions to students with visual impairments, address the student by name. Many students are unable to see body language or subtle cues due to their low vision.
- 50) Tape record daily assignments. The student may listen to them as many times as needed. This is simple to do and it will foster independence.
- 51) Touch is important for visually impaired students. Provide hands-on experiences whenever possible.

Modification of Daily Assignments

Daily assignments are used to verify the students' understanding of the concepts presented in the classroom. Students often are asked to respond in a written format, but this is not always possible for students with special needs. Some students feel overwhelmed, which, in turn, may result in extreme frustration and acting out behaviors. Modifications need to be made if the student is to be successful in the general education classroom. The first step is to determine the objective of the assignment. For this reason, it is important you are in the classroom for the presentation and assignment directions. Once you have determined the objective, you can modify the assignment accordingly.

During completion of daily assignments, it is an optimum time for the student to receive remedial support. Often daily seat work activities are designed to reinforce previously taught skills or to check understanding of a specific skill. In conjunction with the general education teacher, determine the appropriateness of the activity. Ask, "Is this beneficial for the student?", and "Is it important the student completes the entire assignment?" Often assignments can be completed orally, allowing extra time for remediation in other academic areas. If this is the case, use the time to reinforce previously taught skills. If other students within the classroom setting would benefit from reteaching or reinforcement, the classroom teacher may ask you to include these students within your group. Ideas for modifications of daily assignments may also be found under the specific subject areas.

- 52) Divide assignments in half. Have the student to complete only the even numbered problems.
- 53) Break assignments into smaller segments and complete the assignment over a period of several days.
- 54) Use a cover sheet with long assignments. The assignment will not be so overwhelming. The cover sheet can be used to block out distracting stimuli on the page.
- 55) Allow students to work with partners or in cooperative groups. A member of the group can read the questions aloud.

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- 56) Allow the student to respond verbally into a tape recorder. The answers can be transcribed at a later time.
- 57) Provide a photocopy of the material. Ask the student to highlight, underline or fill in the blanks on the photocopy, instead of copying the entire page of sentences, math problems, or paragraphs.
- 58) Provide assignment sheets to help the student organize and prioritize daily assignments. Include due dates. Make sure the student checks off the assignments when complete. Use Form 12 in the Appendix.
- 59) Allow the student to respond orally and write the responses for the student. This is beneficial for the student who is continually behind with class work. Make sure the student completes some writing assignments on a daily basis.
- 60) Provide extra time for completion of assignments.
- 61) If the assignment permits, allow students to illustrate their answers instead of responding in a written format.
- 62) Provide supplementary materials that coincide with the text at a easier readability level. Look in the teacher's guide. Many textbook companies provide extra blackline masters for different levels: beginning, intermediate, extension, extra practice, and language activities for ESL students. Some of these may be appropriate for the student.
- 63) Provide parallel activities at an appropriate level. For example, if the objective is to locate nouns, the student's reading textbook could be used. Allow the student to write the nouns from the story. If the student is unable to read, locate objects in the classroom that are nouns.
- 64) Many general education teachers provide written contracts for specific units. This allows for simple modification to the length of the unit by highlighting assignments the student is responsible to complete.

- 65) Provide pads of stick-on notes. Each incomplete assignment is written on a separate note. When the assignment is complete, the student throws the note away. If the assignment is not completed during the school day, the note is placed in the student's assignment book at the end of the class.
- 66) Give the student a computer, word processor, or calculator to complete required work.

Notes:

Written Language Modifications

Written language is a complex process. Students may encounter difficulty with written language for many reasons. Some students have trouble transferring their ideas into a written format. Other students encounter difficulty with the grammar, syntax, or the mechanics of writing. Still others have expressive language limitations or trouble with the acquisition of language. If a student refuses to write, encourage all attempts. Focus on the ideas instead of the sentence structure and spelling.

Journals:

There may be times a student is so frustrated with the writing process and language processing is so difficult the student refuses to write. If this happens, allow the student to choose a topic during the journal or written language session. Encourage the student to write on a daily basis. Journaling is a form of writing that can be completed daily. There are several ways to encourage a student to write. Choose one of the following methods:

- 67) Free response. With free response the student chooses and writes freely about a topic. In conjunction with the special education teacher, an individual goal is determined for the student. The goal may range from a single sentence to a full page.
- 68) Question and answer format. With this method, a question is written for the student to respond to. The written dialogue continues as the student answers the question and directs a question back to you or the general education teacher.
- 69) Sequence cards. Provide the students with a sequence of pictures. (Ask the Speech and Language Teacher for picture sequence cards). The student places the cards in sequential order and writes one or more sentences about each picture. If this is too difficult, ask the student to write a sentence about the final step only.

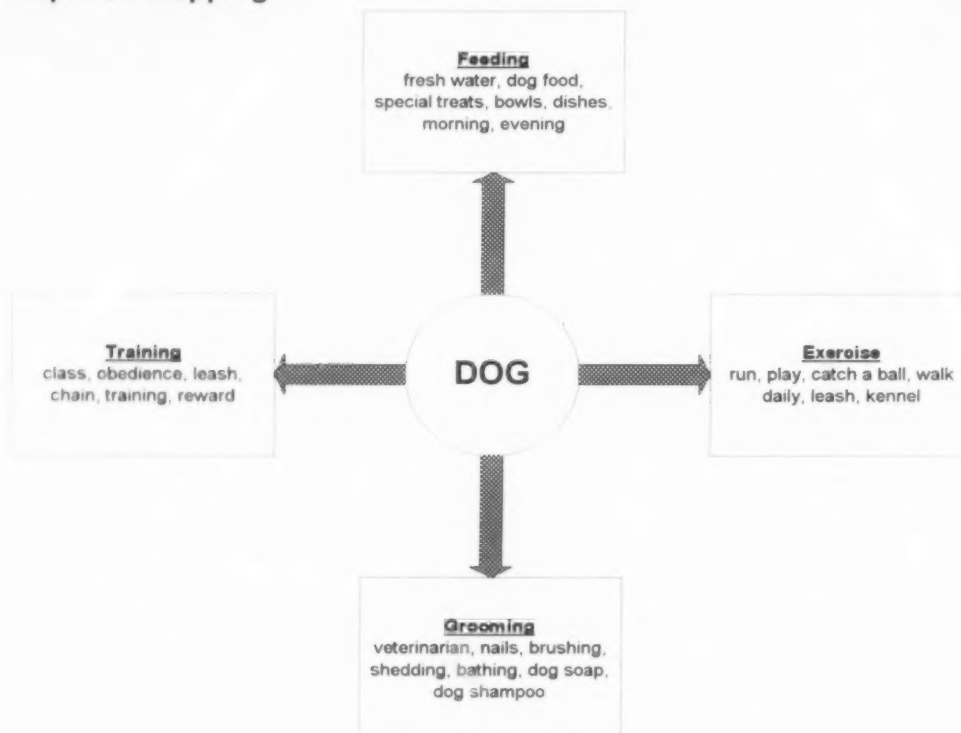
Written Language Assignments:

- 70) Give specific instructions for written language assignments. Specific instructions may include: a predetermined number of paragraphs, a specific number of sentences, or a specific length. For example, ask the student to write two good paragraphs. Each paragraph should include a topic sentence with two supporting detailed sentences. Gradually decrease the structure as the student becomes more confident in his or her ability to write.
- 71) Allow the student to choose one familiar idea. Generate a word bank. A word bank is developed by brainstorming and listing all possible words related to the specific topic. This assists with spelling and the generation of ideas. If the words are grouped by subtopic, it will assist the student with organization of ideas and paragraphing. Continue with the same topic for several days.
- 72) Once the idea is generated, assist with the development of an outline of the story or topic.
- 73) Keep a selection of pictures available and give the student a picture to help generate ideas.
- 74) Ask the student to bring a picture from home and write about the picture.
- 75) If the student has difficulty generating ideas, request the student to write a minimum number of sentences per day. (You may have to start at one!) Build on the topic each day. The next week increase the goal. Make sure the student is held responsible to meet the individual goal.
- 76) If the student is unable to generate a sentence alone, write descriptive words or illustrate the idea. The words may be combined into simple sentences at a later time.
- 77) Write the ideas and have the student copy the idea or story from the model.

The Writing Process:

- 78) Avoid excessive corrections with the mechanical aspects of writing, especially when a student is beginning to write. Focus on the development of ideas.
- 79) Teach mapping skills when writing. The map should include the key ideas and words for the topic. Mapping also helps the student to visualize the relationship between the parts of the story. To illustrate mapping, the topic of dogs will be used. In the center of the paper write the word dog. Now divide the paper into four sections. Each section contains words that pertain to some aspect of the dog. Topics for each of the four sections might include: feeding, exercising, grooming, and training dogs as pets. When the mapping exercise is complete, the student uses the words to develop sentences or paragraphs. The story is organized for the student. The student has a main topic, four paragraphs and a selection of key words for each paragraph.

Example of Mapping



80) Before writing the story, have the student answer the following questions:

- ✓ Who is the main character?
- ✓ Who else is in the story?
- ✓ What does the main character want to do in the story?
- ✓ What happens when the main character does this?
- ✓ How does the story end?

These simple questions will help students with the organization of their thoughts and an outline for the story. Photocopy Form 13 from the Appendix to use with the student.

81) Teach the importance of a beginning, middle, and end in each paragraph. Incorporate transition words such as *first*, *next*, *then*, *last*, or *finally* when writing paragraphs. Transition words help students to sequence their thoughts.

82) Teach the student to proofread all assignments. Provide a checklist form for proofreading. The form should include the following: capitalization, punctuation, spelling, paragraph indentation, margins, and sentence sense. The form is used as follows: The student reads the entire paper and edits the paper for capital letters. When completed, the student checks it off on the form. The second time, the student reads the paper and edits the paper for punctuation. Continue in this manner until the entire paper is proofread. Form 14 in the Appendix has several samples which may be photocopied.

83) The SPACE strategy may be used as an error monitoring strategy when writing. The acronym SPACE stands for the following:

- ✓ **S**pelling
- ✓ **P**unctuation
- ✓ **A**ppearance
- ✓ **C**apitalization
- ✓ **E**rror Analysis

Teach the student to self check each area in the SPACE acronym before turning in the assignments.

- 84) Ask the student to tape record or read their stories aloud after writing. Many students will be able to hear inaccurate sentence construction. Allow ample time to make the corrections.
- 85) Since written language is an important form of communication, allow students to share stories and reports often. It is important for students to hear good models. You may want to share stories and reports written by their peers. If a student does not feel comfortable reading aloud in the classroom, talk with the general and special education teachers. Do not require students to read aloud if they do not desire to do so.
- 86) Allow the student to use a computer or a word processor.
- 87) Look at the quality of the assignment instead of the quantity produced. When teaching topic sentences, details, and a closing sentence, allow the student to produce one quality paragraph instead of a series of paragraphs.
- 88) When working on class reports, use a fill in the blank standard form. These can easily be created for any topic. At the elementary level, an example for the topic *Birds* might be:

My bird is a _____. He lives in the _____ part of the United States. He is _____ in color.

The student can add as many details as necessary.

- 89) When writing research papers, assist students with the formulation of topic sentences. Encourage the student to look for details. Modify the number of sources in the bibliography. Using the topic of Lions, topic sentences may include:
- ✓ *The lion is a member of the cat family. (The student adds details).*
 - ✓ *The lion can be found in many countries throughout the world. (The student adds details).*
 - ✓ *The lion is a carnivore. (The student writes about food sources).*

- 90) Allow the student to present the final project to the class in another format. A videotape, demonstration, display, or oral presentation may capitalize on the student's strengths.

Prewriting Stage:

With some students, a large discrepancy exists between the student's ability to write and the writing ability of their peers. Some students may be in a prewriting stage. If the student is in a prewriting stage, parallel or supplemental activities can be provided according to the student's Individualized Education Plan. The ideas and strategies listed in the Fine Motor section will provide additional support for these students.

- 91) Allow the student to dictate a story to you or a peer. The student learns to read words which are part of their expressive language. Later, the student can practice reading the story and writing or tracing the letters.
- 92) Ask the special education department if commercially made paper with raised lines is available. This paper works well to practice letter and word formation.
- 93) Have the student copy material from the board or overhead onto paper. The final outcome for the student may be a handwriting goal.
- 94) Allow the student to illustrate their response instead of writing.
- 95) Ask the special education teacher if templates are available. The tracing of templates helps to develop fine motor control.
- 96) Use tracing paper and have the student trace large objects from a coloring book. If the student is unable to trace, trace the outlines for the student using bold lines, short lines and dots. The student can connect the symbols. Another option is to enlarge pictures or cartoons with an overhead projector and allow students to trace and color the pictures.

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- 97) Ask the student to reproduce simple shapes from a model. Use simple pictures from art instruction books or learn to draw books.
- 98) Practice letter formation with the use of clay, sand trays, and templates.
- 99) Allow the student to work with dot-to-dot pictures. Use both A,B,C and 1,2,3 pictures.
- 100) Incorporate other fine motor developmental activities such as stringing beads, pegboard designs, sewing cards, weaving, cutting, or clay during the written language blocks.

Spelling in the Context of Written Language Assignments:

At first glance a written language assignment with numerous spelling errors appears to lack creativity or solid ideas. Allow the student to spell phonetically. Ask the student to read their response to you. Revise the paper with the student. Give encouragement to all attempts.

- 101) Choose one or more frequently used words from the student's journal or creative writing assignments. Develop a spelling dictionary of frequently misspelled words. Encourage the student to use the dictionary and thesaurus when proofreading assignments.

Fine Motor:

Students often have wonderful, creative ideas. A delay in fine motor skills may cause difficulty and frustration for the student when transferring the ideas to paper. Instead of allowing creativity to flow, the student may write in short, choppy sentences to compensate for the difficulty in fine motor control. Interestingly, when the obstacle of writing is removed, these students are some of your most creative students.

- 102) Ask the special or general education teacher to model a correct pencil grip. Check the student's pencil grip. Place adhesive tape or a pencil grip on the pencil.
- 103) Some students are unable to write within the lines. Provide various sizes of wide ruled paper. Begin with the large ruled size and slowly decrease the size until the student is using grade level paper. If the correct size of paper is unavailable commercially, create the appropriate size for the student using lined paper and a felt tipped pen. Photocopy it.
- 104) Write the student's answer or story in pencil and allow the student to trace it with a fine tipped pen.
- 105) Provide a close-up model for the student to copy, instead of the board or overhead. It is often difficult to copy from a distant model. Students frequently lose their place when transferring information from the board to paper, especially if the student is unable to read the material. If the material is written in cursive and the student still prints, you may have to transcribe the material for the student.
- 106) Provide an alphabet card or alphabet strip so the student is able to see the correct formation of the letters. Allow the use of manuscript or cursive on daily assignments depending on the student's preference.
- 107) If appropriate, write long assignments for the student. The special or general education teacher should notify the parent or guardian of expectations regarding homework assignments. With long assignments, it may be permissible for the parent to write the assignment for the student. Communicate the expectations to the parents.
- 108) Provide the student with a word processor or a lap top computer to use with long assignments, if available.

Spelling

Spelling words should be compatible with the reading level of the student. The special education teacher will assist with creating an appropriate list if the classroom list is too difficult. As with all modifications, spelling modifications may be simple or complex. Simple modifications may include modifying the length of the list, whereas a complex modification may include the creation of an alternate spelling program. If developmentally the student is not ready for a formal spelling program, students can use the time to develop fine motor activities, letter formation, and sound/symbol relationships.

Grade Level Spelling Lists:

Many students with disabilities are able to succeed in the regular spelling curriculum with minimal modifications. Try some of the following modifications.

- 109) Modify the classroom spelling list by adjusting the number of items on the list. Guidelines should be noted in the IEP.
- 110) Set individual spelling goals. Increase the student's goal when mastery level is met on three consecutive tests. For example, the student may study five words for three weeks. If the student successfully masters the five words increase the goal to seven words. (Check the Individualized Educational Plan or meet with the special education teacher to establish the initial goal).
- 111) At the beginning of the school year, send home a master copy of all of the yearly spelling words. The student will be able to study the words in advance. If the student forgets the weekly spelling list, the comprehensive list is at home.
- 112) Group the spelling words into word families. Word families have similar endings such as: should, would, and could. Focus on learning the spelling pattern.
- 113) If the student is unable to read the spelling list, delete some of the unfamiliar words. Insert commonly used sight words or

words that follow the current word patterns. Ask the special education teacher for an appropriate list of reading sight words.

- 114) Use the computer to adapt the previous year's spelling list into the format of the current grade level spelling list.

Parallel Spelling Activities:

Not all students are developmentally ready for a formalized spelling program. Some students may need parallel activities. These activities may be completed alone, with a peer, or with you.

- 115) Create a spelling list of consonant sounds that coincide with the initial letters sounds of the class spelling list. The student writes the initial consonant sound as peers write the entire word. An example would be:

<u>Class List</u>	<u>Student</u>
store	s
book	b
take	t

The student is able to work on sound association and letter formation. Due to the irregular sounds of the vowels, words may need to be substituted. In this manner the student is able to test with their peer group.

- 116) Begin with basic sight words and simple phonetic words such as *a*, *at*, *am*, and *an* when the student is consistently able to reproduce several letters and sounds.
- 117) Begin spelling with the student's proper name along with the names of family members, friends, peers or pets. Develop sentences from the spelling list. Practice the sentence until mastery has been reached. This lesson may be incorporated into spelling, handwriting, or used as a written language activity. An example would be: (see next page)

List

my

Mary

is

My name is Mary.

Mary is my name.

- 118) Provide supplemental practice pages of the words. The student may trace the words with multiple colors of crayons, felt tipped pens, or fine tip markers. This approach is good for students who learn using a whole word method. It also alleviates the frustration of practicing and learning a word incorrectly.
- 119) Provide practice sheets the student can trace. Use peers to drill and monitor the student's progress.

Drill and Practice Activities

Drill and practice activities take place daily in the classroom. The student may practice alone, with a peer, or with you.

- 120) Group together words that contain the same prefix and suffix to teach patterns. The prefix is added at the beginning of a word and the suffix at the end. Teach the spelling and meaning of the prefixes, suffixes, and base words in isolation.
- 121) Highlight, in different colors, base words, suffixes, and prefixes to aid with visual discrimination.
- 122) Reinforce only one spelling rule at a time.
- 123) Provide a close up model from which to work. Many students experience difficulty when copying unknown words from a distant model.
- 124) Combine spelling and handwriting goals to allow time for extra drill and practice.

- 125) Allow a minimum of ten minutes structured practice time daily. Students who experience difficulty with organizational skills will need this time to find and organize their materials.
- 126) Do not require all students to practice all words daily. It may be too overwhelming for some. Practice two or three words daily if the student is frustrated by a long list.
- 127) Make supplemental drill and practice exercises such as spelling bingo, hangman, and word finds.
- 128) Vary the daily drill and practice exercises. Along with paper and pencil tasks, allow daily practice on the chalkboard, in small groups, orally, or with a tape recorder.
- 129) For younger students, practice with shaving cream, sand trays, fingerpaints, or write the words in pudding. Check for allergies first.
- 130) Provide an audiocassette of the word list. Tape record the pretest while the general education teacher administers it to save time. The student can practice alone, during extra class time, or take the tape home. This audiocassette may also be used if a student needs to re-test or was absent during the test.
- 131) Make rainbow words. Make word strips with the spelling words. The student traces the word with several different color markers or crayons. This will provide drill and practice for correct letter formation. Trace each word with three or four colors.
- 132) Allow the student to practice on a typewriter, computer, or word processor.
- 133) Assist students with configuration clues to recall correct spelling.

h a v e l i t t l e

Study Methods for Spelling:

For students with disabilities, the most effective method is a method that will capitalize on the student's strengths. Three guidelines for studying spelling are listed here. Form 15 in the Appendix includes a checklist for each method. These checklists may be distributed to students.

Visual Learners:

134) This method focuses on the student's visual strength. This method is appropriate for students with a hearing impairment or students who rely on visual patterning.

- ✓ The student views the word while you read it aloud. (Provide the student with a flashcard.)
- ✓ The student studies the word by reading it, spelling it aloud, and reading it again.
- ✓ The student attempts to spell the word orally two times without the flash card.
- ✓ If the student is able to spell the word correctly, the student attempts to write the word without a model.

Auditory Learners:

135) If a student relies heavily on auditory skills to learn new words, the following steps may be implemented into the spelling program. This method should be used for students with a visual impairment.

- ✓ The student observes you or a peer reading, spelling, and writing the word.
- ✓ The student reads the word and attempts to repeat the letters verbally after the teacher.
- ✓ Once again, the student listens to the teacher spell the word and the student repeats it after the teacher.
- ✓ The student spells the word aloud without assistance.

Multisensory Approach:

- 136) A cover and write method is appropriate for a student who needs a multisensory approach.
- ✓ The student looks at the word and pronounces it. (Provide the student with a flashcard of the word.)
 - ✓ The student turns the card over and spells the word aloud without looking at it.
 - ✓ The student while looking at the word, writes the word.
 - ✓ The student compares the word to the flashcard model.
 - ✓ If the word is written correctly, the student practices the word three times.
 - ✓ A final check is made. If the word is correct, the student is ready to go on to the next word.
- 137) Allow the student to experiment with the various programs. The student will be able to choose a study method that best meets their individual needs. Practice several times until the student is proficient with the selected study method. Spot check frequently if the student is practicing alone.

Spelling Tests:

Many students with disabilities not only need to learn the spelling of the word, but in many situations the student may need to learn to read the word also.

- 138) Test orally instead of in writing. Give the student an index card or paper with their score to hand in to the teacher.
- 139) Have the student spell the word to you. Write the student's response verbatim. This provides assistance to the student experiencing fine motor difficulty.
- 140) Cue the student as to the number of letters in each word when working with silent letters. This helps the phonetic speller to include the silent letters.

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- 141) Test over several words daily in place of one final test.
- 142) With lower functioning students, allow the student to select corresponding spelling flashcards for word recognition.
- 143) If the student needs long periods of time to process information and you are unable to administer the test individually, create an audiocassette. The student will be able to stop the tape and think about the word for as long as needed.
- 144) If letters are frequently reversed, ask the student to spell the word orally when correcting the test. Give credit for each correct response.

Grading:

In most instances the general or special education teacher is responsible to select grading criteria. You may be asked to keep a record of scores. Some techniques that may be used follow:

- 145) Record pretest and post test scores. Give these scores to the classroom teacher. The teacher may base the student's grade on effort and improvement in place of percentage.
- 146) Ask students to self monitor their spelling progress by creating a chart of their pretest and posttest scores. Many students are motivated by self-monitoring techniques.
- 147) Set a weekly goal. Reward the student if the individual goal is met. Students with special needs need encouragement.

Notes:

Mathematics

The difficulties a student experiences in math may be directly related to auditory and visual processing, sequencing of steps, or rote memory. Math problems require multiple, sequential steps in order to produce the correct answer. Confusion often results from the numerous steps involved to complete one math problem. Students may forget one step in the process, therefore, the final answer is incorrect. Since math concepts build upon each other, a student who is unsure of basic addition, subtraction, or multiplication facts will not be able to complete a long division problem. The errors may not be with the actual process, but the student may consistently make factual errors.

With basic math, some students with disabilities require the use of concrete materials such as manipulatives. For some students this works well. For other students, it may only cause confusion due to the multiple steps. For example, when using manipulatives, the student must first complete the operation using the concrete materials. Once the student obtains an answer, the student must retain the answer in the short term memory in order to transfer the answer to paper. Since many students with disabilities also have difficulty with short term memory, this is no easy task.

When providing service in the math setting, refer to the chapters entitled Modifications of Daily Assignments and Testing Procedures. Both chapters have many practical ideas to support the student in the area of math.

General Teaching Strategies:

- 148) Students with disabilities may experience difficulty with abstract concepts. Reinforce math concepts with "real life" situations. This relationship will help students understand the relevance of the lesson.
- 149) When monitoring students, do not worry about perfect math calculations. Look for their understanding of the process. Once the process is understood, check the accuracy of the calculations.

- 150) Reinforce key math terms separately. Provide students with a dictionary of math terms. Include drawings and examples to illustrate the various steps of the problems.
- 151) Use drawings, diagrams, and visual demonstrations to help the student establish a visual and concrete relationship.
- 152) Use colored chalk or fine tip markers when reinforcing assignments. Direct the student's attention to the important points. Color code the groups of ones, tens, or hundreds, or color code the columns of numbers when regrouping.
- 153) Highlight similar math operations on each page. Highlight all addition problems in yellow, subtraction in blue, and so forth. If the assignment includes several types of math calculations on one page, the student should complete all addition before proceeding on to the next. For example, the student should complete all the multiplication problems before moving on to division problems.
- 154) Teach math fact families. Show the student the relationships between numbers. An example of a math fact family follows:
- $$\begin{array}{l} 6 + 4 = 10 \quad 10 - 4 = 6 \\ 4 + 6 = 10 \quad 10 - 6 = 4 \end{array}$$
- 155) If applicable, model math problems using manipulatives. The special or general education teacher can teach you the correct procedure. When modeling, explain each step verbally. Then instruct the student to verbalize each step to you, while practicing the procedure. Listen carefully. You will be able to understand the thinking process used and analyze which step is causing difficulty for the student. Patterns of errors usually emerge in the following areas: inadequate knowledge of facts, incorrect operations, or use of ineffective strategies.
- 156) When using numberlines to reinforce concepts, make a large numberline on the floor for the student to walk on. This assists the student with directionality. If a student is unable to grasp the numberline concept, use counters, cubes, popsicle sticks, or buttons for reinforcement.

- 157) When teaching the concept of money, use real money instead of paper or cardboard money.
- 158) Test a student individually if the class is using timed tests. Reduce the number of problems or increase the time limit. Make sure the student has extra paper to diagram or draw pictures if basic facts are not memorized. An alternative to timed tests is to use the computer. In many commercial math programs, a specific amount of time and number of problems may be preset. If using timed tests, ask the student to graph their results. Encourage the student to look for improvement. Some classroom teachers insist on timed tests, although they cause frustration for many students with disabilities.
- 159) When reinforcing word problems, simplify the vocabulary. Many word problems include irrelevant information. Discuss why the information is irrelevant. Cross it out. Teach key words that are associated with word problems. When reinforcing word problems it is helpful to do the following:

Ask the student to read the problem and determine the question.

Reread the word problem. Look for key words in the problem. Some of the key words are: altogether, together, in all, are left, spent, or remain.

Draw a picture of the word problem.

Write out the problem. Estimate the answer before solving it. If the answer seems reasonable, solve the problem.

Parallel Math Activities:

Some students are unable to complete the same curriculum as the rest of the class. For these students, it is important to be aware of the goals and objectives written in the Individualized Educational Plan. Supplementary skills can be provided in the classroom that correspond with the class activity. Listed below are just a few activities that can be completed with the student.

- 160) Provide parallel activities in the same content area as the rest of the class. For example, if the class is learning addition with regrouping, the student may work on basic addition facts. It is possible the student can still be involved in the discussion, demonstration and use the manipulatives if the math teacher varies the questions and directs specific questions toward the student.
- 161) Correlate the objectives from the Individualized Education Plan with the instruction. If the student is working on number recognition, use daily assignments or the textbook to find numbers upon request. If the objective is number formation, the student can copy problems from the textbook.
- 162) Use dot-to-dot activities for number sequencing and number recognition.
- 163) Work on number formation with the use of tracers or templates.
- 164) Provide the student with number cards. Work on the chronological sequencing of numbers. Use the same cards for one-to-one correspondence, ordering from least to greatest and number recognition.
- 165) Make cards for numbers and mathematical symbols. Have the student put them together into correct mathematical equations. The student may copy the equation onto paper.
- 166) Collect shells, beads, seeds, various shaped, pastas and buttons. Put them into boxes or bags. Use these collections to sort and classify objects. The materials may also be used to assist with one-to-one correspondence.
- 167) Use egg cartons to sort various materials and establish the concept of *group*. Use this concept of group to introduce addition and subtraction.
- 168) Teach the student to use a calculator. Allow the student to do some of the problems in the text with a calculator.

- 169) Have the student collate math papers into chronological order for the class.
- 170) When providing parallel curriculum, coordinate student's assessments, seat work, and rewards with the general education math class.
- 171) Look for corresponding educational games the student can play with other students in the classroom. Vary the peer group.
- 172) If a computer is available, look for computer programs that include number recognition, counting, matching, dot-to-dot, or sequencing of numbers.
- 173) Keep a box of supplemental math materials in the classroom. Activities can be selected daily from the box and materials can be updated as needed.

Modifying Math Assignments:

- 174) Place arrows on the student's worksheet to assist with directionality. Many students will try to perform math calculations from left to right instead of right to left, which is required for many math calculations.
- 175) Draw dotted lines between columns of math problems so the student is able to record the information in the correct column. An easier method is to turn lined paper vertically so the student has ready made columns. Graph paper may also be used for instant organization of math problems.
- 176) Box in the ones column so the student knows where to begin the math calculation.
- 177) Check with the special education department to see if consumable texts are available. Students with fine motor difficulty will not have to copy the problems, therefore, will be able to spend more time with the actual calculations.

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- 178) If consumable texts are unavailable, ask permission to photocopy and enlarge the text so the student may write on the photocopied page.
- 179) When working with problem solving activities, emphasize the problem solving steps, not the final answer. Many students do not participate in problem solving activities for fear the final computation is incorrect.
- 180) Number the steps in word problems. Highlight important words.
- 181) Allow the student to use charts, graphs, and tables to complete their assignments once the process of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division is understood.
- 182) When using addition, or multiplication charts, provide the student with a cutout "L". This will assist the student in finding the intersection box of columns and rows.
- 183) Allow ample time to memorize the math facts before using the calculator.

Student Aids:

- 184) When teaching multiple step math calculations, provide a visual model next to the written steps. The student will be able to see the correlation between the model and the written problem.
- 185) Create a small booklet for the student to keep as a math reference book. The booklet should include the basic math concepts covered in the class. The student can refer to the booklet if confused about a mathematical operation. Include the math terminology and a visual diagram for each step.
- 186) Attach a numberline to the student's desk or in the math book. This will assist the student with addition, subtraction, and the correct formation of the numbers. This will also assist students who experience difficulties with number reversals.

- 187) Teach the student how to use the face clock in the classroom as a counting tool for addition and subtraction facts to 12. This will support the student who is adverse to having a numberline placed on the desk.
- 188) Create a chart with two numberlines. Label one for addition with an arrow to the right and label the other chart for subtraction with an arrow running to the left. This will help the student to internalize the concept.
- 189) Allow the student to use rubber number stamps if number formation is extremely difficult.
- 190) Use stick-on notes to help the student keep the place in the text.

Notes:

Organizational Skills

As a paraprofessional you will assist students with organizational skills. Students with disabilities are often able to complete assignments when adapted to their specific needs, but may lose or misplace the completed work. Some students experience difficulty with organization of time and physical space.

Organizing the Environment:

- 191) Make a simplified map of the school. Number and highlight classroom areas. Include arrows to indicate the most direct route between classes.
- 192) If the general education teacher does not write a daily schedule for the class, create one. Some students need to anticipate change before it occurs.
- 193) The student must know where to turn in daily assignments and homework. If locations change frequently, buddy the student with a peer to assist.
- 194) Remind the student when class is almost over. Allow several extra minutes to organize materials before transitions.
- 195) Make sure students are seated in a location that allows them to see the board without turning their bodies. If not, speak with the classroom teacher.
- 196) If a student is easily distracted, check the seating arrangement. The student should be seated away from windows, doors, the pencil sharpener, and high traffic areas.

Student Organization:

- 197) Color code folders for each subject. If possible, coordinate the folders with the colors of the textbook. Keep a pencil, pen, paper, and other necessary items in each folder.

- 198) If folders are confusing and material is still misplaced, use a three ring notebook. Keep all folders, papers, and the assignment book in the three ring binder. The student is instructed to keep all assignments in the notebook until the paper is due. For loose papers, use a three ring hole punch. The student can punch papers and insert them into the notebook. This works well for the student who has extreme difficulty with organization.
- 199) Tape a large manila envelope to the inside of the student's desk. If assignments are not complete, the student can slip the paper into the envelope to complete later.
- 200) Clean and organize the desk or locker at least once a week. Organize the papers into three piles: file into folders, take home, or toss.
- 201) Make sure the student places a heading on all papers. With written assignments it is easy to confuse a social studies rough draft with an English rough draft report, especially at the elementary level. Proper headings assist with the organization of papers in appropriate folders or sections of the three ring binder.
- 202) Ask individual students to share organizational tips. Keep a list of ideas to try. Each student needs to figure out the system which works best. General education students need to be taught organizational skills also.
- 203) Use a homework book or an assignment sheet. Teach the student how to prioritize assignments. Some students need a weekly or monthly calendar to understand the concept of time.
- 204) List assignments and the approximate length of time for completion. This will assist the student to prioritize their classwork.
- 205) Supply the student with a pad of "Things To Do Today". Ask the students to write reminders to themselves.
- 206) Ask a peer to help monitor assignments. The peer can assist the student in placing assignments in correct folders or turning in assignments. You do not have to do it all.

- 207) For students that have difficulty remembering to do homework, allow the student to call home and leave a message on a recorder, if available. Make sure the message includes the subject and page numbers of the assignment.
- 208) Check out an extra set of textbooks for home use. Many times a student will fill in the assignment book but will forget to pack the textbooks.
- 209) Create a simple daily checklist. The student can tape onto the top of the desk or into a notebook. Write down the assignments with the due dates. Cross off the assignment when completed.
- 210) When an assignment has been completed, encourage the student to turn it in immediately. It can be very frustrating if the student must redo an assignment because it is lost.
- 211) Plastic bags work well for extra pencils, crayons, markers, and supplies. At the elementary level, students can keep several individual bags of supplies. When transitioning to another class the student does not have to search for supplies.
- 212) Spot check students at the beginning and the end of transition times. Many students miss directions because they are organizing their supplies.
- 213) If assisting students with check-in and check-out times, go to the student's classroom. The student will not miss valuable class time or important directions. You may also use the time to check homework assignments listed on the board.
- 214) Teach the student to use self-talk methods. Ask the student to verbalize the steps, after the teacher has given a multi-step direction.

Directions

Each day students must process hundreds of directions. Many students experience difficulty in school because they are not able to process directions. Inattention, difficulty with auditory processing, memory deficits, poor listening skills, limited receptive language, or inability to sequence information are only a few of the reasons. No matter what the root of the problem is, it can be a very frustrating experience for the student.

Oral Directions:

- 215) Make sure you have the student's attention before giving directions. Pause and wait if you do not. Eye contact is important.
- 216) If the general education teacher presents the directions orally, write the directions so the student is able to refer back to them.
- 217) Do not add irrelevant information during oral directions. Keep directions concise and simple.
- 218) Simplify the vocabulary.
- 219) Accompany all verbal explanations with visual demonstrations whenever possible.
- 220) Break the direction into one or two step components. If the directions are complex, allow the student to complete the first several steps before giving more directions.
- 221) Appoint a peer tutor to coach the student through multiple step directions.
- 222) Ask the student to repeat directions back to you or a peer to check for understanding.
- 223) Use a combination of visual and auditory directions for the student. Draw pictures of the steps

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- 224) Use a camera. Photograph the various steps of experiments, demonstrations, or multiple step activities. Glue the pictures into a file folder in chronological order. The student may use this folder as a visual aid. File the directions with the unit for future use.
- 225) Record daily assignments on tape. The student may listen to the directions as many times as needed. Include the due dates. Encourage the student to write incomplete assignments into their homework notebook.
- 226) If the student has a hearing impairment, appoint a peer to cue the student when directions are given orally in class and over the intercom system. Always check for understanding.

Written Directions:

- 227) Provide directions in sequential order. If there are multiple steps, number the steps or place a colored dot between each step of the instruction.
- 228) Allow extra time to copy the assignments. If the student is unable to copy from a distant model, have a peer write or dictate the directions to the student.
- 229) Ask the student to read written directions at least two times before asking for assistance. Allow extra time to underline or highlight key words and phrases.
- 230) Always check for understanding before the student begins the assignment.
- 231) For the visually impaired student, always give test directions, assignments, and important directions orally.
- 232) Place a piece of yellow acetate over the page of print to enhance the contrast for student's with a visual impairment.
- 233) Use black felt tip pens to trace over directions and darken the print for students with low vision.

Large Group Instruction

Oral Presentations:

A large portion of the school day is spent listening to the general or special education teacher present material orally. A great amount of material presented daily is in lecture format. This can be a frustrating experience for the student who experiences difficulty with auditory processing.

- 234) While listening to the lecture, write the goals and objectives of the lesson for the student. Discuss the goals and objectives before beginning assignments.
- 235) Review previous lessons, notes, and vocabulary words with the student. Link new facts and materials to previously learned information.
- 236) When reviewing materials from a class lecture, present only relevant information. Use nouns when possible. Leave out pronouns such as it, they, those, etc. The use of pronouns may cause confusion, especially if the student did not fully grasp the subject of the lecture.
- 237) Simplify the vocabulary when reviewing lecture notes with the student.
- 238) When presenting material orally to the student, ask the student to frequently summarize new information. Ask questions to check for understanding. Relate information to previously learned concepts as much as possible.
- 239) Check to see that the student has removed all unnecessary materials from the desk before the lecture begins. If the student is required to take notes during oral presentations, two sharpened pencils, paper, and a highlighter should be the only objects on top of the desk.

Note Taking Skills:

Note taking is a difficult process. Think about the last time you attended a class or a workshop. Did you take notes on the syllabus provided for you? Perhaps you brought a tape player from home and recorded the information to listen to in your car on the way home. Did you jot down key words and phrases? Or did you write entire phrases verbatim? Perhaps you were able to generalize the information and fill in a chart or a graph. When the presenter stated, "This is important!" did you furiously try to write every word? As adults we use many strategies at different times and in different situations. Note taking is not a simple skill. It requires the student to process information both auditorily and visually. The student must then output the information in a written format. Students must be taught various strategies to take notes successfully.

- 240) Encourage the student to take notes in their own words.
- 241) Teach common abbreviations for note taking.
- 242) Provide the student with an outline of the main topics before they are presented. Provide ample space to take notes on the outline sheet.
- 243) Before the presentation, read through possible discussion questions. This will help the student focus on the most important information.
- 244) Teach key phrases such as *please remember this*, *this point is very important*, or *write this down*. General education teachers use these words frequently when making key points.
- 245) When comparing or contrasting information, provide the student with a graph or chart to complete.
- 246) Teach the student how to make a time line. Time lines assist when information is presented in chronological order.
- 247) Teach the student to jot down key words, if there is not enough time to complete the thought. You can assist the student with the organization at a later time.

- 248) If the student is unable to take notes, allow a peer to use carbon paper, or make a photocopy of the peer's notes. You may also take notes for the student. The student should still practice the skill and be an active participant.
- 249) Show the student how to highlight important information in their notes.
- 250) When the general education teacher uses an overhead projector with transparencies, the student with low vision should look directly into the overhead projector while the transparency is projected onto the wall. Discuss this with the vision teacher.
- 251) An overhead projector will assist the student with a hearing impairment. It will allow the student to see the presentation and read the teacher's lips simultaneously. Make sure the student is seated in an appropriate location.
- 252) Tape record or make a video of the presentation. Allow the student to take it home for review.

Notes:

Classroom Assessments

Many students require alternate forms of assessment due to difficulties with reading and written language. If the goal is to measure the student's knowledge of a curriculum area, it is important to test only the curriculum and not penalize the student for the disability. Since many students have difficulty with reading and writing, you will be responsible to read and write tests for many students.

- 253) Test the student orally or individually.
- 254) Allow the student to demonstrate the concept or the process which is currently being tested. Allow the student to illustrate or create a final project demonstrating mastery.
- 255) Write the answers to the questions for the student. Be sure to record the answers verbatim.
- 256) Allow the student extra time to complete the test. Administer the test outside the classroom area. Find a place free of distracting stimuli.
- 257) Read all test directions orally. Check for understanding.
- 258) Tape record the test and allow the students to tape record their answers.
- 259) If the test permits, allow the student to respond only to the even or odd numbered problems. Check with the general education teacher.
- 260) Maintain a record of the pretests and posttests. These records will reflect effort and improvement. Give these to the special education teacher.
- 261) Divide the test into segments. Each segment should have only one set of directions.

- 262) Circle, underline, or have the students highlight key words in the directions. You may also do this for the student before the test is received.
- 263) Use recognition of facts rather than factual recall on tests. Delete the trick questions on commercially made tests.
- 264) If the district requires the student to take standardized tests, ask the special education teacher if it is possible to order consumable tests. This will eliminate the need to transfer the response to a computer score sheet. If a computer score card must be used, have the student complete the test on paper and you can transcribe the answers at a later time.
- 265) Most standardized tests rely heavily on the ability to read the material. If the student's reading level is several years below grade level, this will be a frustrating experience. Address this issue with the special education teacher. If the student is unable or is excused from participation in the standardized testing, it is addressed in the Individual Education Plan. In place of the testing use the time for review, reteaching of materials or previewing upcoming lessons.

Notes:

Behavior and Attention Difficulties

Some students in special education have behavior disorders. Many students with disabilities are medically diagnosed as ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) or ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). Modifications need to be made within the classroom setting if the student is to experience success in school. For the majority of the students, the strategies and modifications discussed previously in this book will assist the student in the classroom. The strategies in this section pertain directly to the student who experiences difficulty with attention, on task behavior, impulsivity, and distractibility.

Providing Structure for the Student:

- 266) Daily structure needs to be provided for all students, but for these students it is especially important. Transition times are difficult and should be closely monitored. If the general education teacher does not have a daily schedule posted, create one for the student. Discuss the schedule and point out daily changes in advance.
- 267) Cue the student in as to when to prepare for the next class or subject. The student needs extra time to adjust and organize materials before beginning a new subject. Provide extra structure during transition times. Many students get in trouble during transition times. Monitor these times closely.
- 268) Review the classroom rules frequently. If a student is having difficulty with a specific rule, write down the rule. Be clear and concise. A student can not argue with a piece of paper. Give specific examples of the rule. Examples may include: Sit quietly when the teacher is talking, stay in your seat when the teacher is talking, sharpen pencils only at the beginning of the class period.
- 269) Always state the positive action you would like to see. For example, if the student is running in the hall, simply say, "Walk, please."

- 270) Check-in and check-out times are important for the student. Go to the student's classroom. Use this time to check homework, assignment books, or to remind the student to turn in completed projects and assignments.

Working with the Student:

- 271) Make sure you have the student's attention when talking to him or her. Eye contact is important.
- 272) Include the student in small group activities and instruction whenever possible. Immediate feedback is important.
- 273) Give one or two step directions. Ask the student to repeat directions back to you. Check for understanding of each direction.
- 274) Give one assignment at a time. Many students are overwhelmed easily. Keep all assignments in a folder. If the student falls behind, complete some of the assignments orally to catch up.
- 275) Allow ample time for hands-on instruction. This will help actively engage the student in the learning process. Active participation is extremely important for this student. It will assist the student in remaining focused.
- 276) Modify daily assignments to alleviate frustration. (See the section on Modification of Daily Assignments).
- 277) Use computer instruction for academic reinforcement when appropriate. The computer provides immediate feedback, self-paced instruction, and helps to increase motivation.
- 278) Use a timer to assist students with on-task behavior. Set a timer for a specified amount of time. Explain the task you would like completed before the timer rings. Monitor and adjust the assignment and time so the student is able to be successful. Once the student remains on-task for the specified amount of time, increase the time. Provide constant reinforcement to the student.

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- 279) Allow the student time during the day to get up, walk around and stretch. It may be appropriate for the student to sit in the back of the classroom. The student may stand and sit as needed with minimal disruption to the class. If movement is necessary, provide clear guidelines about when movement is appropriate.
- 280) Many students benefit from immediate feedback. Provide self-correctors for the student's assignments.
- 281) If difficulties arise, allow the student to choose between two or three appropriate activities. In this manner, tasks are still completed, but the student is allowed a small amount of control.

Impulsivity and Distractibility:

- 282) Seat the student in a location with limited visual stimuli. Artwork or cluttered walls may distract the student from lessons.
- 283) Check seating arrangements. Students should not be seated near doors, windows, or high traffic areas.
- 284) Allow extra time to complete assignments, even when the assignments have been modified.
- 285) Timed activities and tests should be avoided. Many students become frustrated when they notice others have completed the assignment. The student will either guess or give up. Discuss alternate activities with the general and special education teacher.
- 286) Teach the student to stop and think before responding. Create a visual signal between the adult and student. An example of a visual signal would be to place your finger aside your nose. When the student observes this, he or she will know that it is time to slow down and think about the action.
- 287) Use visual clues for movement. A simple technique is to place a red and green cup near the classroom teacher. Stack the cups. When the red cup is on top, the student must remain seated.

When the green cup is placed on top the student may move about the classroom. This can also be created using a sign and construction paper.

- 288) Teach students to talk to themselves. This is commonly referred to as self-talk. The student may say to himself, "I can do this", over and over. The student may repeat directions aloud. This is especially helpful with complex steps and directions. It will also assist the student in remaining focused on the current task.
- 289) If possible, the student should be seated near students who are quiet, independent workers. Provide good role models. Do not seat disruptive or easily distracted students together.
- 290) Allow the student to have only the necessary materials for the current assignment on top of the desk. Toys and play objects should remain at home. If the student must have something in hand, give them a small piece of clay, or a small balloon with flour inside during class discussions.

Reinforcement and Discipline:

Many students with behavior disorders are more dependent on external reinforcement in comparison to their peer group. In an inclusionary setting, students may need constant reassurance they are doing well. A reward system may help to meet this need in the classroom. Reward systems are also used frequently in the cafeteria, study periods, or recess.

- 291) If the student consistently needs to be disciplined during a specific academic area, it is important to check to see if the current modifications are appropriate. Report this to the special education teacher. Do not wait until the situation escalates.
- 292) If a student disrupts the class frequently, report the behavior to the special education teacher. No student should interfere with the education of the other students. An alternative for a disruptive student is to video tape the class presentation. The student watches the video the next class period and completes

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the assignment alone or with your assistance. In this way the student is responsible for the assignment yet is unable to disrupt the other students. For many students positive reinforcement for acting out is received from the other students. With the removal from the classroom setting, there is no reinforcement. The student returns to the class when the assignment or lesson is complete.

- 293) At times, a student needs a place to get away from stimuli and regroup. Find a quiet place for the student. This may be a quiet place in the classroom, in another classroom, or a vacant area. Give the student a special pass to be used in this situation. If the area is in another classroom, a telephone code may be worked out with the cooperating teacher. One ring means the student is on the way. If the student does not arrive, the cooperating teacher can call back. The student may take classwork and complete it in this area. Rules must be set. An example of the rules may include:

- ✓ Work area may be used only during class work times.
- ✓ A pass must be obtained from the classroom teacher when leaving the classroom area.
- ✓ You must return within 20 minutes.

Reward Systems:

- 294) Use a reward system. Since many students need continuous and frequent feedback, break the educational day into time blocks. Some students need feedback every five to ten minutes during the implementation of a reward program. With the student, create a list of reinforcement activities. It is important to establish rewards with the student. What seems like a great reward to you may not be perceived as a reward by the student. Some examples of rewards may include extra computer time, time to chat with friends, choosing a friend for a special activity, omission of a homework assignment (at the teacher's discretion), or simply a can of pop. Make sure that the special and general education teachers have approved the rewards before beginning. Several types of reward systems follow.

- 295) Place a chart on the student's desk. As you walk around the class place a check or a sticker onto the chart for appropriate behavior and work completion. When the card is full, it may be turned in for a reward.
- 296) For older students, a simple positive reinforcement phrase or a pat on the back may be sufficient.
- 297) Keep parents informed when the student has shown improvement during the day. Create a list of positive sayings such as:

Awesome Day!
I discovered the secret to success today!
Super Star!
I'm a Great Student!
Wow!

Photocopy the sayings from Appendix Form 16 onto fluorescent paper. Cut apart. Place the sayings into an envelope. When the student has a good day, the student may choose one to take home. If proper guidelines are set, older students will be able to monitor their own progress. Rewards may be given when the student has received a specific number of positive phrases. This is a simple way to communicate with the parents. Parents may offer an incentive in the home.

- 298) A point system may be implemented. Points are assigned to each class block. Points may range from 0-3. The classroom teacher assigns points, if the student has met specific criteria at the end of the class period. Homework assignments may also be included on the sheet. Guidelines for points must be determined and discussed before the system is implemented. A place for positive comments should be included on the chart. At the end of the week, points are tallied and the student receives a predetermined reward. This works well for older students. Form 17 in the Appendix is a sample worksheet for your use.
- 299) A token system works well with many students. This is an easy method. Keep a pocketful of tokens. The tokens may consist of small laminated paper shapes, buttons, beads, or pennies. To-

kens are given randomly to the student for appropriate behavior. The student keeps the tokens in a container. The tokens are exchanged for rewards. Most students will exchange their tokens as soon as they have enough for a reward. Encourage the student to work towards a long term goal.

- 300) This method also uses tokens, but tokens are removed for inappropriate behaviors. Supply the student with tokens in the morning. The student returns tokens to you when inappropriate behaviors occur. At the end of the day, the student may use the remainder of the tokens for a reward. (Guidelines must be developed as to the number of tokens removed for inappropriate behaviors. Once again, make sure it is specific and in writing. A student cannot argue with a piece of paper.)
- 301) The class discipline plan may not be appropriate for all students. Students may need a supplemental discipline plan with extra warnings, coupled with a reward system. Some students require only one warning, or they tend to take advantage of the system. When altering the class discipline plan, both methods should be tried. This should be developed by the general education and special education teacher. All adults involved should be aware of the plan and follow it.
- 302) A daily report can be used to monitor behavior and academic goals. An easy way to create a daily report is to tape an index card to the student's desk. Subjects are added to the card as they are presented during the day. For younger students a happy face may be placed on the card after the subject if the student has experienced success during the time block. For older students a rating scale of 1-5 may be used. This report may be sent home daily to increase communication between the school and the home.
- 303) A daily log has proven successful in coordinating home and school communication. The log is usually a spiral notebook that remains in the backpack daily. Both parents and teachers use this log to write comments, concerns, and suggestions about the student. The student is rewarded for taking home and returning the notebook daily.

- 304) Teach the student to use positive self talk. "I can do this!" "I can handle this!" or "I'm good at this!" are all examples of self-talk. If you hear a student using negative self-talk or putting him or herself down, stop the student and help the student to rephrase the comments positively.

Notes:

Afterword

The paraprofessional's job is essential to every inclusionary setting. In many school districts nationwide, the number of paraprofessionals is equal to or exceeds the number of special education teachers employed. Whether you are employed several hours per week or as a full time employee, you are a vital part of the program. Inclusion settings cannot exist without your assistance.

Not everyone can be an inclusion paraprofessional. The job can be very demanding. You may be required to work with many students and teachers throughout the day. This requires extreme flexibility on your part. Communication skills are important. A positive attitude, enthusiasm, and patience are crucial for success.

The job is demanding and the rewards are numerous! The rewards might include, the dazzling smile of a student who has just learned to read, the sparkle of success in the eyes of a child unable to communicate verbally, the encouragement of classmates when a student is faced with a difficult challenge, or the feeling you have knowing that you make a positive difference in the lives of many children. Without your support, inclusionary settings would cease to exist.

Whether you are thinking about applying for a job, have been recently hired, or you are an experienced paraprofessional, I hope this book will provide you with the support you need.

Write to me at Peytral Publications and tell me about your experiences. If you have specific comments, suggestions, or questions that have not been addressed in this book, let me know.

I want to wish you good luck. You will make a difference in the lives of many.



Appendix

Form 1

Daily Schedule

[illegible]

Daily Communication

Student's Name: _____ Date: _____

Daily notes or comments _____

- ☐ see me regarding this
- ☐ speak with the general education teacher
- ☐ call the parent

Daily Communication

Student's Name: _____ Date: _____

Daily notes or comments _____

- ☐ see me regarding this
- ☐ speak with the general education teacher
- ☐ call the parent

Backup Discipline Plan

Student's name: _____ Date: _____

Special Education Contact Person: _____

General Education Teacher: _____

Backup discipline plan: _____

Additional Information: _____

If assistance is needed with this student, please call the following person(s).

Contact Person

Telephone Number

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Notes:

- ☐ Copies
- ☐ Paraprofessional
- ☐ General Education
- ☐ Special Education
- ☐ Emergency Contact Person
- ☐ Emergency Contact Person
- ☐ Emergency Contact Person
- ☐ Parent

Form 4

Medical Alert Form

Students name: _____ Date last updated: _____

Special Education Contact Person: _____

General Education Teacher : _____

Area of Concern: _____

Symptoms: _____

Additional Information: _____

If assistance is needed with this student, please call the following contact person.

- ☐ This is an emergency situation. Call 911 immediately and then contact the following people.

Contact Person	Telephone Number
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____

Notes:

- ☐ Copies
☐ Paraprofessional
☐ Nurse
☐ General Education
☐ Special Education
☐ Emergency Contact Person
☐ Emergency Contact Person

Form 5

Classroom Information

General Education Teacher: _____

Special Education Teacher: _____

Students in the Classroom: _____

Classroom Schedule:

Classroom Rules: (List the classroom rules)

Consequences for not following rules:

Classroom discipline: (Who is responsible for classroom discipline? What is the discipline plan? Will all students use the same discipline plan? What are the rewards and consequences?)

Other pertinent information: (time class begins, pencil sharpening, bathroom breaks, homework.)

Form 6

Goal worksheet

Student: _____ Subject Area: _____

General Education teacher: _____

Special Education teacher: _____

Date: _____

Goal: _____

Objectives: _____

Date: _____

Goal: _____

Objectives: _____

Date: _____

Goal: _____

Objectives: _____

Date: _____

Goal: _____

Objectives: _____

Form 7

Curriculum Modifications
Student Worksheet

Student's Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Team Members: _____

Step 1 List the student's strengths:

Step 2 List the goals:

Step 3 Ideas and Strategies for Modifications:

Textbook Modifications:

Daily Assignments:

Written Language:

Spelling:

Form 7 (Cont.)

Mathematics:

Organizational Skills:

Directions:

Large Group Instruction:

Classroom Assessments:

Classroom Behavior:

Other areas of concern:

*Person responsible for the modifications:

Textbook: _____	Daily Assignments: _____
Written Language: _____	Spelling: _____
Mathematics: _____	Organizational Skills: _____
Directions: _____	Group Instruction: _____
Assessments: _____	Behavior: _____
Other: _____	

*Special education teacher, classroom teacher, inclusion assistant, peers, volunteers, related service personnel (OT, PT, DAPE), other school personnel - e.g. art, physical education, technology, music, or media specialists.

Form 8

**Overview of
Curriculum Modifications**

Student's name: _____ Date: _____

Homeroom teacher: _____

Special Education teacher: _____

Note the modifications that will need to be made for the student in the following areas. Fill in the name of the person responsible to create the modifications. Make copies of the completed form and distribute the copies to all team members. If no modifications are needed at the present time, leave the area blank. Modifications may be added at a later date.

Textbook / Person Responsible:

Daily Assignments / Person Responsible:

Written Language / Person Responsible:

Form 8 (Cont.)

Spelling / Person Responsible

Math / Person Responsible:

Directions (Oral and Written) / Person Responsible:

Testing Procedures / Person Responsible:

Large & Small Group Instructions / Person Responsible:

Organizational Skills / Person Responsible:

Form 9

Textbook Modifications Student Worksheet

Student's name: _____ Date of Planning Meeting: _____
Subject: _____ Grade: _____

Team Members

Name:

Title:

Please check all modifications that apply to the individual student.

☐ **The student will need assistance with modifications to the classroom textbook.**

- ☐ The student should read all classroom texts with a peer or with a small group.
- ☐ Audiocassettes should be provided to the student.
- ☐ The entire textbook should be provided on audiocassettes.
- ☐ The entire textbook should be paraphrased for the student.
- ☐ Alternating pages of the text should be recorded for the student.
- ☐ _____

*Person responsible for the modification: _____

☐ **The student will need the following supplemental services.**

- ☐ Preteaching or previewing of the material.
- ☐ Outline of the required text.
- ☐ List of vocabulary words and definitions. A modified list, if appropriate.
- ☐ Checklist of required assignments with due dates.
- ☐ Study guide for required assignments.
- ☐ A complete set of textbooks should be provided for home use.
- ☐ _____

*Person responsible for the modifications: _____

☐ **The student will require direct support from the Special Education Department.**

- ☐ A supplemental textbook will be needed

Who will provide the service? _____

Number of minutes daily? _____

Time of day service will be needed. _____

Form 10

Modifications for Daily Assignments
Student Worksheet

Student's name: _____ Date of Planning Meeting: _____
Subject: _____ Grade: _____

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Team Members</u>
	<u>Title:</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Please check all modifications that apply to the individual student.

☐ The student will need assistance with modifications for daily assignments.

- ☐ Modify the length and grading of the assignment.
- ☐ Allow the student to work in a cooperative groups.
- ☐ Allow the student to complete the assignment orally.
- ☐ Allow a peer to read and write the student's ideas.
- ☐ Allow the student extra time to complete the assignment.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

*Person responsible for the modifications: _____

☐ The student will need the following supplemental services.

- ☐ A checklist of assignments and due dates.
- ☐ A complete set of textbooks should be provided for home use.
- ☐ A photocopy or a consumable book.
- ☐ _____

* Person responsible for the modifications: _____

Form 10 (Cont.)

☐ The student will require direct support from the Special Education Department.

☐ Assignments provided at a lower readability level.

☐ Supplemental curriculum or adapted materials will be provided covering the same skill area.

Amount of service daily? _____

Approximate time of service? _____

* Person responsible to provide the service: _____

☐ The student is unable to complete the assignments assigned to the class.

☐ Supplemental assignments will be provided in accordance to the student's Individualized Education Plan.

☐ The student has a Special Education Inclusion Paraprofessional written into the Individualized Education Plan.

Amount of service daily? _____

Areas of special concern. _____

☐ Ideas for supplemental materials.

* Person responsible to provide the service: _____

Additional comments:

Form 11
Student Volunteers

Name

Form 12
Daily Assignments

Date	Subject/Assignment	Teacher	Due date	✓

Story Outline

1. Who is the main character in the story?

2. List other characters in the story.

3. What does the main character want to do (accomplish, solve) in the story?

4. List the main events of the story in the order they occur.

5. What happens as a result of the actions?

6. How does the story end?

Form 14
Proofreading Check-list

Elementary

Check for:	Look for:
Capital letters	☐ sentences ☐ names of people ☐ places ☐ titles
Ending punctuation	☐ ! ☐ . ☐ ?
Spelling	☐ use a dictionary ☐ check your notes

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Upper grades

☐ S pelling ☐ P unctuation ☐ C apital letters ☐ P aragraphs ☐ Indented ☐ Topic Sentence ☐ Details ☐ M argins ☐ N ame, date, class	☐ S pelling ☐ P unctuation ☐ A pppearance ☐ C apitalization ☐ E rror Analysis
--	---

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Form 15

Study Methods for Spelling

Write the words on individual flashcards

Visual Learners:

- ☐ Look at the word while it is read aloud to you.
- ☐ Read the word, spell the word, read it again.
- ☐ Spell the word two times without looking.
- ☐ Check your word with the flashcard.

Auditory Learners:

- ☐ Watch your teacher write the word on the flashcard.
- ☐ Read the word. Repeat each letter aloud after your teacher.
- ☐ Listen to the teacher spell the word aloud again.
- ☐ Spell the word aloud alone.

Multisensory Approach:

- ☐ Look at the word on the flashcard and read it aloud.
- ☐ Turn the flashcard over and spell it without looking.
- ☐ Look at the flashcard, and write the word on a piece of paper.
- ☐ Check the word with the flashcard.
- ☐ If the word is correct, write the word three more times without looking.
- ☐ Check the flashcard. If the word is correct, choose another word to practice.

Awesome!

I discovered the secret to success today!

Wow!

I did it!

Fantastic day!

Way to go!

Congratulations!

Form 17

Student Behavior Management

Name:

Date:

<u>Class</u>	<u>Teacher</u>	<u>Number of Points</u>	<u>Comments and Homework</u>

Criteria:

- 3 Points _____
- 2 Points _____
- 1 Point _____
- 0 Points _____

Glossary

abstract thinking - ability to think in terms of ideas.

ADD - see Attention Deficit Disorder

alternate assessments - an evaluation using various methods in place of traditional paper/pencil tests to assess a student's knowledge. Demonstrations, oral presentations, or projects are some examples.

Attention Deficit Disorder - a condition in which a student has difficulties in directing or maintaining attention to normal tasks of learning.

auditory blending - blending of sounds into words.

auditory discrimination - ability to hear differences and similarities in spoken word.

auditory memory - ability to recall information that is heard.

behavior - a relationship between a stimulus and a response.

behavior modification - the process which creates a change in the stimulus/response pattern.

cognitive ability - the ability to learn. Cognitive ability testing may also be referred to as intelligence testing.

collaboration - to work together towards a common goal.

configuration cues - the outline of a word in relation to the shape and length.

Inclusion: An Essential Guide for the Paraprofessional

contract - a written agreement between teacher and student that outlines specific behaviors and consequences.

discrimination - ability to differentiate between visual, auditory, tactual, or other sensory stimuli.

distractibility - attention that is easily removed away from the task.

expressive language - vocal, gestures, and/or written expression.

fine motor - use of small muscle groups for specific tasks such as hand-writing, cutting, or pasting.

hyperactivity - excessive activity in relation to others of the same age and in similar situations.

IEP - See Individualized Education Plan.

Individual Education Plan - an individual program designed for a student who qualifies for special education services.

impulsivity - acting or speaking out without considering the consequences.

inclusion paraprofessional - a person who works with a specific group of students in an inclusion classroom.

inclusion pupil paraprofessional - a person who is assigned to support a specific student. The assistant is written into the IEP.

inclusive schooling - a school setting in which students receive their educational instruction within the classroom setting for the entire or a substantial portion of their school day.

least restrictive environment - a term requiring that, to the greatest possible extent, students with disabilities are educated with their non-disabled peers.

modifications - adaptations made in the curriculum, presentation method, or the environment to provide support for the individual student

memory - recall of visual, auditory, and or tactile stimuli.

mnemonics - visual or word related aids that facilitate retrieval of information.

parallel activity - An assignment in which the outcome is similar but the materials used to reach the outcome may be entirely different.

previewing - reading, listening to, or viewing the selection before instruction or a test.

readiness - physical, mental, and emotional preparedness for a learning activity.

short attention span - inability to pay attention to something for a long period of time compared to others of the same age.

supplemental teaching - provisions provided to the student in the form of reteaching, reinforcement, and/or alternate curriculum when needed.

supportive teaching - modifications made to the classroom curriculum or the environment by the special education teacher or inclusion paraprofessional which will allow the student to experience success in the general education setting.

sound symbol - relationship between the printed form of a letter and the sound.

team teaching - two teachers working together jointly to develop, plan and teach a lesson.

visual discrimination - ability to perceive likenesses and differences in pictures, words, and symbols.

The Inclusion Series
Resources for Educators, Paraprofessionals and Parents
from
Paythal Publications

Inclusion: 450 Strategies for Success by Peggy A. Hammeken
8 1/2" by 11" - 140 pages. \$19.95 plus ISBN -9644271-7-6

Since its release, this book has received nationwide attention. It has been listed in numerous newsletters and magazines as an exceptional, practical, easy-to-use, and teacher friendly resource. This innovative book was selected as the *Editors' Choice* in the January-February 1996 issue of Learning-Successful Teaching Today. The article, "Grappling with Inclusion Confusion" was co-authored by Peggy Hammeken.

This valuable resource is written for general and special education teachers who teach students with special needs. Each inclusionary setting must be tailored to the school for which it is created. This book includes simple step-by-step guidelines to tailor your inclusionary setting. If you already have an existing setting, you will find many ideas to expand and improve the program. It also includes hundreds of practical teacher tested strategies which are numbered for quick easy reference. The strategies are listed by topics such as large group instruction, note taking skills, written language, math, spelling, attention difficulties, textbook modifications, and assessments to name a few. The book also includes many practical forms to help educators with all aspects of the inclusionary setting. This book is a valuable tool for general and special education teachers, teachers entering the field of education, Chapter I teachers and ESL teachers.

Inclusion: A Practical Guide for Parents - Tools to Enhance Your Child's Learning by Lorraine O. Moore, Ph.D.
8 1/2" by 11" - 152 pages. \$19.95 ISBN - 9644271-3-3

With the increasing acceptance of inclusion, parents have become vital members of their child's special education team. With this growing responsibility, parents are formulating questions for which there have not been sufficient answers until now. This book serves as an excellent guide for answering these questions and for providing parents with the necessary tools to promote their child's learning.

In this book, the practice of inclusion is compared to the more traditional methods of special education, emphasizing the benefits of inclusionary settings. Dr. Moore supplies parents with background information on why some children have more difficulty learning than others. Concrete techniques have been developed for parents to gain a greater understanding of their child as a student. Some of these are strategies, exercises, questionnaires, checklists and do-it-yourself graphs. Several strategies can be applied to the creation of a better learning environment for a child at home. Other strategies are provided for parents to use to help their children benefit to a greater degree from all learning experiences. Specific exercises address ways of assisting children in further development of their reading, math writing and attention skills.

With parents charting their child's progress, both improvement and difficulties are recognized as they unfold, allowing the child to formulate good learning habits from the beginning. Although inclusion integrates all types of learners in the same environment at school, support of the educational process of the child at an individual level is emphasized. Sample forms are included for parents to use with their child and in communicating with educators. A listing of some specific reference books and resource organizations that parents can contact is also furnished.

This book is an invaluable resource for parents to better understand their child's method of learning and ways to optimize this process. This is not only a book for parents, but also for educators to use as a resource for themselves and as recommended reading for parents.

A Collection of Forms from the Inclusion Series

Over 50 forms in all \$12.95 ISBN 0-9644271-0-9

This collection is offered to help the busy educator. All of the reproducible forms from **Inclusion: 450 Strategies for Success**, **Inclusion: An Essential Guide for the Paraprofessional** and **Inclusion: A Practical Guide for Parents** are available in single sheets. This will allow you to file the information directly into file folders, make transparencies easily for inservices, and photocopy every form without removing them from the books. The forms are reproduced exactly as in the books and correspond to the individual textbooks. It is a supplement to the Inclusion Series and must be used in conjunction with the series.

Restitution - Restructuring School Discipline by Diane Chelsom Gossen
softcover, 160 pages, \$12.00 ISBN 0-944337-11-2

Get to the heart of the discipline problems in your school by teaching students to be responsible to themselves and to others when they make mistakes. By focusing on self-discipline and the need to "make it right," a renowned author and expert on Control Theory explains how to manage students without relying on humiliation or endless cycles of rewards and punishments. Join the schools across the country who have given their students this powerful method of learning self-discipline.

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Help your school staff learn how to lead students to fix their own mistakes, focus on self-discipline, and build self-esteem. This innovative guide expands on the ideas in the book *Restitution* and provides activities and guidelines to design and conduct your own staff development program.

Living with ADHD: A Practical Guide to Coping with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder by Rebecca Kajander, CPNP, MPH.
7 1/4" by 10" 72 pages \$9.95 ISBN - 884153-08-9

This friendly, encouraging book is the perfect place to start for any parent who would like to learn more about ADHD. As with our previous publications, this book contains practical, easy-to-use tips that can help educators, parents and students cope with home, school and social settings. The book includes resources for parents and educators, if additional help and information is needed. The author is a pediatric nurse practitioner who has fifteen years of experience in the assessment and behavior management for students with ADHD.

This practical easy to use book should be available to every parent who would like to learn more about ADHD. It is an excellent resource for all school districts to have in their reference libraries.

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